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A N
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G E O R G E A N N E B E L L A M Y.



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G E O R G E A N N E B E L L A M Y ,
L A T E O F C O V E N T - G A R D E N T H E A T R E .

W R I T T E N B Y H E R S E L F .

To which is annexed,
Her original Letter to JOHN CALCRAFT, Esq.
advertised to be published in October 1767,
but which was then violently suppressed.

" The Web of our Life is of a mingled Yarn, Good and Ill
" together; our Virtues would be proud, if our Faults whipt
" them not; and our Crimes would despair, if they were not
" cherished by our Virtues."

All's Well that Ends Well, Act 4, Scene iii.

T H E T H I R D E D I T I O N .

I N F I V E V O L U M E S .

V O L . IV.

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R T H E A U T H O R ,
A n d s o l d b y J . B E L L , a t t h e B r i t i s h - L i b r a r y , S T R A N D .

M D C C L X X V .



A N
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE
L I F E
O F
GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.

LETTER LXXXIII.

July 25, 17—

MY journey from Bristol to Chester was very disagreeable, as it was across the country, and through bad roads. When I got to that city, I met my servants, together with all my paraphernalia, plate, and every thing but the money I expected for the overplus of my jewels. Mr. Calcraft wrote to me; but he took no notice of what alone could have made his letter agreeable. As the epistle is rather a curious one, I will copy it. Young gentlemen may learn from it how to write to their sweethearts.

“ Christ Jesus God, why do you keep me in this torment. If you will not write, tell me so, and make me completely miserable. I have had a letter from my

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B

“ Lord,

" Lord, and have seen that to your maid; by
" which I find you are unalterable in your
" resolution. I hate Hollwood, and every
" place which reminds me how happy I
" have been in your company. Caroline has
" almost broke my heart with shewing me
" the sweet letter which accompanied your
" fairing. Every body is made happy but
" me; but vexation and the gout will soon
" relieve you from the man you hate. I
" have ordered the plate, your new sedan,
" and books to be sent you. I have sent
" you the parchment I have found, which
" I suppose is the counterpart of your
" annuity; but depend upon it, I shall not
" think it sufficient for your support. For
" God's sake write to me, and be assured
" whilst I have breath, I am affectionately
" yours.

" Signed,

" JOHN CALCRAFT."

The parchment mentioned in the above letter, was that given me by Mr. Davy, the person who had lent me the five hundred pounds. It was a writing to show that I had only sold the annuity conditionally. Mr. Calcraft's barefaced meanness in pretending to be ignorant of what he had before upbraided me with, increased, if possible, my disgust and contempt.

Unfortunately for me, I kept these feelings, with the injuries which occasioned

them, a secret from every body but Lady Tyrawley. Whilst my former friend, the person who had succeeded me in Mr. Calcraft's affection, propagated innumerable falsehoods against me. As she possessed a fertile genius, she was able to clothe them with an appearance of plausibility, which made them believed; and my silence gave her every advantage over me. My extravagance furnished her with a fund of calumny. Nor was this the worst. It was industriously reported, that I entertained a partiality for a man I scarcely knew; and that this was the cause of my leaving Mr. Calcraft. So improbable a story, I think, could hardly gain belief. For, had that been the case, I should certainly have staid in London, where my imagined lover was, rather than have removed to so great a distance from him.

But to what lengths will not malevolence and the love of slander carry some people! How finely, and at the same time how *justly*, has Shakspere described this propensity, in the following lines!

Slander

Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue

Out-venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath

Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters *.—

Instead of being able to indulge my tender emotions, the mortification and disgust I had so long been a prey to, entirely engrossed my thoughts. I had not even the slightest idea of forming another connection. Not that I thought myself debarred from it, by any ties that subsisted between myself and Mr. Calcraft; for these were now perfectly dissolved by his duplicity. Had I encouraged such a wish, I could soon have extricated myself from all my difficulties, as there was many a competitor for my favour; particularly one of the first and most generous men in the kingdom.

The packet not being ready to sail from Parkgate, lest I should forfeit the penalty of my articles, by not being at Dublin in time, I set off for Holyhead. As I travelled by myself, I had leisure to indulge my melancholy. I could not even help envying the happiness of my servants, in whose bosoms cheerful innocence seemed to reign, whilst I

* Cymbeline, Act III. Scene IV.

was

was tortured with the severest reflections. These arose, not only from my unhappy situation, but from the perfidy and ingratitude I had experienced from a man, who, whilst he was pretending to regret my loss, was, as I had been informed, abetting and inventing the most improbable, and the falsest reports of me.

Among these, it was given out by them, that I encouraged the addresses of a noble Lord, with whose Countess I had the honour of being upon terms of intimacy. Had I been inclined to gallantry, for this reason, as well as upon account of his own deformity, that nobleman would have been the last man I should have chosen. They also carried their inveteracy so far, as to engage a person who wrote for bread, and is a disgrace to the navy, to scandalize me in a scurrilous publication, not unlike Bellmen's Verses.

In travelling to the Head, however dull and melancholy my days were, I had great entertainment in the evenings; there being always some person at the inns playing upon the harp, the favourite instrument of the Welch. And the ditties they played seemed to suit the gloomy temperature of my mind. When I arrived at Conway Ferry, the wind was so high, that it was impracticable to go over. I was therefore obliged to remain at the ferry-house during the night.

Here I was necessitated to sup in the same room with all those who were forced, like myself, to take up their abode at the inn. There being but one room below stairs, and that, like the cobler's, serving at once for "parlour, for kitchen, and hall," we all sat together; only the parlour was divided from the kitchen by a curtain. And both were tolerably well filled. For besides my suit, which consisted of the two postillions, a guide, two footmen, and three maids, the company was numerous. From the unfavourable appearance of the habitation, I was apprehensive that my entertainment would have been as homely. But I was not only most agreeably surprized with one of the best suppers I had ever sat down to at an inn, but with a small neat bed-room, and a very good bed, and every accommodation that could be hoped for in the best inns on the road. And all this at so trifling an expence, that it was not to be imagined the people of the house could get a reasonable profit.

When I arrived at the Head, the packet was ready to sail. I found there a great number of people waiting to go over, but very few would venture, the sea being extremely boisterous. But as I neither wished for life, nor was apprehensive of danger, it was very immaterial to me in what state the sea was. I therefore went aboard, and

by

by way of preeminence, was cooped up in what is called the state-cabin. This situation was the means of my being more indisposed than I otherwise should have been. For during a storm, which lasted four days, I underwent the most excruciating sickness. And this was augmented, by having nothing to drink but cold water. As the passage is usually made in a few hours, I had not thought it necessary to lay in a sea-store.

We landed at Dunlarny ; when I was so much enfeebled by the fatigue I had undergone, that I was obliged to be supported to the shore. A coach was sent from Dublin to convey me to the house of a lady on College Green, with whom I had been very intimate. As unpacking would take up more time than I chose to bestow upon it, I set off immediately, without staying to change even my linen. And from the situation I had been in for four days, together with the uneasy state of my mind, it must be supposed that my appearance was not the most brilliant.

My arrival having been hourly expected, curiosity had induced many of the students of the college to watch for my coming. I accordingly found the door of the house, at which I was to alight, crowded with them, in expectation of beholding a wonder. For it could not enter into the imagination of those young gentlemen, that any thing less than a

a perfect beauty had been so general a topic of conversation, and the subject of so many poetical compliments from their predeceſſors.

One of my female domestics was tolerably handsome ; she therefore, at first caught their eyes ; but as she had not that appearance of elegance which distinguishes the gentlewoman, the mistake was but momentary. At length I stepped out of the coach. The long-expected phænomenon now made her appearance. But Oh, how different a figure from what their imagination had depicted ! Fashion to yourself the idea of a little dirty creature, bent nearly double, enfeebled by fatigue, her countenance tinged with the jaundice, and in every respect the reverse of a person who could make the least pretensions to beauty. Such was I, when I presented myself to the sight of the gazing crowd. And so great and natural was their surprize and disappointment, that they immediately vanished, and left me to crawl into the house, without admiration or moleſtation.

I spent the evening at the Parliament-House, where many of the seniors of the college, as well as the Provost, were present. Others likewise came to see the fright which had excited the disgust of the curious in the morning. Nothing is so favourable to an object as exaggerated dispraise. For, with only

only the assistance of ablution, and in the most simple dress, (simplicity in my dress being, as I have already observed, my constant adoption, except when finery was absolutely needful, and I always scorned to owe any addition to art, which I disliked as much in the adornment of the person as of the mind) I made a more favourable impression upon the company than could have been expected.

The next morning Mr. Moffop came to congratulate me on my safe arrival, as the violence of the storm had made him apprehensive for my safety. He informed me, that Mr. Woodward had been confined by a fever at Cork; notwithstanding which, as soon as he had heard of my engagement, he had sent the letter containing my promise of giving him the preference, to Mr. Barry, who had most illiberally posted it up in one of the principal coffee-houses in Dublin. It might not be unnecessary to add here, that when Mr. Calcraft was informed of this transaction, he sent to demand of Barry four hundred pounds he had lent him some years before. As it was not in Barry's power, Mr. Woodward was obliged to pay it for him. Thus was the latter punished for his indiscretion with regard to my letter.

I had sent my men servants and the horses back to London from Holyhead, as the inconvenience of bringing them to Dublin

would have been great. Finding lodgings to be inconvenient, I took a ready-furnished house in Frederick-street. And as the theatre did not open for some time after my arrival, I had an opportunity of seeing many ladies, who favoured me with their recollection and intimacy. My old acquaintance, Mr. Crump, with whom I had always dealt for Irish linens, after my mother had declined that article, came to pay his respects to me. And as he was an universal merchant, I ordered of him wine, and what other things I wanted. He had entered into a connection in trade with a person, whose name was Hosea Coates. This man was of a rude, turbulent disposition, and greatly attached to Crow-street theatre, in which he had several shares; he consequently dreaded my success.

Upon the opening of the theatres, the ladies of Dublin divided themselves into different parties, making a point to support, with their utmost interest, the house they attached themselves to. Ladies Kildare, Brandon, Leinster, Powerscourt, and the Honourable Miss Caulfield, with many other respectable personages, professed themselves the patronesses of Mossop and myself. And, indeed, I must attribute a great part of the success we met with, to their partiality; the company in Crow-street being infinitely stronger than ours. That consisted of Barry, Woodward, Abington, and Fitzhenry, besides

besides some good seconds. Among these I include Mrs. Dancer, who was by no means looked upon as capital then.

As for our troop, it always put me in mind of Sir John Falstaff's ragged regiment, a part of which he had robbed the gibbets of. We were, however, joined, some short time after, by Mr. Brown, who had merit in comedy; and by Mr. Digges, who was a great favourite in Dublin, particularly among the ladies. As the latter will make a principal figure in the subsequent part of my history, it will be necessary to give a short description of him. He is blest with talents, is a fine figure, his face is handsome, and he has the art of persuading those with whom he converses, that he is the best of men. Through my intimacy in the Delaware family, I learned that he had been ill-treated by his uncle, and pitied him much; but as his character was universally known to be that of a man of gallantry, I declined admitting him as a visitor.

This was the state of our company, and likewise of the parties of the ladies, who carried their partiality to the most extravagant lengths: I appeared in Belvidera. But was by no means so well received in it as I had formerly been. This hurt me greatly, as I did not give myself time to consider, that I then had no competitor; and now I was left to stand alone against the united force of a

company, which would have done credit to a London theatre. We, however, more than shared the public favour.

Mr. Mossop revived "The Orphan of China," which had succeeded at Drury-Lane the winter before. The dresses, in which he and myself were to perform, came from London. But how to manage, with regard to those of the rest of the characters, was a difficulty hardly to be got over. As the manager had quarrelled with Tracey, the taylor, credit was no more to be had than money. And if the piece could not be got up so as to anticipate the other house, we had very little chance of rivalling them in it; all their decorations, clothes, &c. being expected from London, and having been already puffed away in all the papers, in the most ostentatious manner.

At length I prevailed upon Tracey, not only to make and expedite the dresses, but likewise to find the materials. We rehearsed three times a day, and after having taken the most indefatigable pains, got the piece ready for representation in less than a week. We accordingly were able to perform it before the proprietors of Crow-street, and got eight great audiences, ere the finery they so much boasted of arrived. This manœuvre proved a sore disappointment to the expectations of the gentry of the other house, who were thereby prevented from reimbursing their

their expences, which, I was informed, were very considerable.

Mr. Digges, who had marked me for a conquest, sighed at a distance, and covered his vanity with such awful respect, that I imagined the character I had heard of him was not a just one. He, at length, through the introduction of a female acquaintance of mine, got admittance to my house as a visitor. And as he was really the accomplished gentleman and an entertaining companion, it was impossible to resist being pleased with his company. For a while he affected to smother his passion. But in a short time after, being really ill, or pretending to be so, he wrote to me, and declared that love for me was the cause of it. Impelled by an irresistible fatality, I read his letters. And a circumstance soon after happened, which helped to forward the attainment of his wishes.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

July 31, 17—

MY bill, for wine and other articles, had of Mr. Crump, amounted to four hundred pounds, two of which I had paid; and intended settling the whole at my benefit, which I thought would be in good time.

For

For though I received fifty guineas a week, yet through the extravagance of my servants, and my own thoughtlessness, I had not a guinea before hand. But to my great surprise I heard that Mr. Crump had failed, and that Coates had taken possession of his effects, books, &c.

"Coriolanus" was bespoke, and Mr. Mossop had the agreeable prospect of a subscription for six plays, which would enable him to pay the performers. For not one of them was regularly paid but myself, though by what means he expended his money I could not imagine. As I went one day as usual to the rehearsal, I observed a mean-looking fellow run by the side of my chair. I called, in my way, upon a lady. Still the same man was my attendant. Having no suspicion of any danger from him, I attributed it to the beauty of my sedan; which, indeed, attracted every eye.

I had some company at dinner, which made it rather later than usual when I set out for the theatre. As my chairmen entered Damask-street, the man who had followed me in the morning knocked at the front window of my chair, and, when I had let it down, shewed me a bit of paper. Upon my enquiring what it was, he told me it was a writ for the two hundred pounds I owed Coates, as successor to Crump's affairs, and insisted that I should go with him. I told him

him he should have the money, if he would go to the theatre, and that I would likewise make him a handsome present for the permission. But this he would not consent to do; as, he said, he had particular orders from the plaintiff to the contrary.

This being the case, I made a virtue of necessity, and went with him to a house in Skinner-row. When I got there, I sent for Coates, but he was not to be found. The officer now candidly told me, that the intention of taking me in the evening was, to prevent my appearing at the theatre that night. He had been particularly warned, he said, not to arrest me in the morning, as they were well assured I should have paid the debt, and by that means have disappointed their purpose. It was two o'clock in the morning before the plaintiff could be met with, and as he had given orders that the affair should only be settled by himself, I was obliged to wait with patience his coming. Mrs. Molloy and Miss Ly'll visited me in my durance, and I believe the officer's house was never so graced before.

Mrs. Usher had been obliged to read my part. As soon as the play was over, Mr. Mossop came to me. And I was vastly apprehensive that he would have caned Coates. This was what the man seemed to wish, for such a vulgar impudent I never heard before. He had the impudence to tell us,
that

that he knew he should easily have got the money, but he wished to prevent my playing that night. "Every thing," continued he, "is fair, where interests clash."

When Mr. Digges found me in this situation, he was like a distracted man. His first business was to give a most severe chastisement to Coates; which, together with some other embarrassments in his private affairs, obliged him to leave Dublin. Before he went, he wrote to me, earnestly requesting to speak with me. I consented. When his attractions, his sufferings, gratitude, pity, and a predilection in his favour, all joined to induce me to enter into a *serious connection* with him. This, though not binding by the laws of the country to a person of my religious persuasion, was notwithstanding valid to all intents and purposes. And the connection, in consequence, made us mutually unhappy, during the two years we lived together.

I was, I think, to be unhappy in every union I formed. Whether this arose from the contrarieties naturally attendant on love, so truly described by Shakspere in the following beautiful lines, or from some other cause, I will not pretend to say.

—For aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear my tale or history,

The course of *true love* never did run smooth ;
But either it was different in blood ;
Or else misgrafted in respect of years ;
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends ;
Or if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it ;
Making it momentary, as a sound ;
Swift as a shadow ; short as any dream ;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night *.

I received, about this time, a letter from Mr. Alderman Cracrost, my attorney in London, informing me, that Mr. Davy's attorney had orders to sue me for the arrears due upon my annuity ; unless I sent him a power of attorney to enable him to make a lawful claim upon Mr. Calcraft, who had refused to pay it. As I had made no doubt but that it had been regularly paid, I was doubly angry at his meanness in having in his letter pretended ignorance of the affair. I therefore immediately signed the writing that was sent me, and forwarded it to London by the first post. I afterwards heard, that upon Mr. Calcraft's treating the person who made the demand, very cavalierly, he was arrested. Hurt at such an indignity offered to a man of his great consequence, he threw the cause into chancery, where it remained hung up during Mr. Davy's life, who was

* Midsummer's Night Dream, Act I. Scene I.

too opulent and too indolent to carry on the suit.

I remained in Dublin till the middle of the summer. And Mr. Moffop not being able to pay me the whole of what he had engaged for, I was obliged to borrow four hundred pounds, before I could leave the kingdom. After I landed in England, I was taken so ill at Chester, that I was confined for several days. I had the happiness to come over with two ladies, who were very attentive to me, and who were kind enough to delay their journey, in order that we might travel to town together.

When I was tolerably recovered, these ladies persuaded me to go with them to the concert. There I met Mr. Crump. As I had not seen him, or heard any thing from him, since my being arrested for the debt due to him, it was natural for me to suppose that he not only knew of the affair, but was consenting to it. I accordingly, when he saluted me with his usual cordiality, could not help expressing my surprize at it. An explanation took place; immediately after which, he abruptly left the room, and, as I have since heard, set off for Dublin, where he endeavoured to revenge himself upon Coates. But he was disappointed in this, for Coates having received some intimation of his design, and dreading his resolution, to avoid his fury, set off for England.

land. And in a short time after, this much injured man, who had before given some proofs of insanity, died raving mad.

Upon my arrival in London, my health not being perfectly restored, I went to my former lodgings at Chelsea, from thence I wrote to Mr. Cracroft, informing him that I would be with him in a few days. I was indebted to this gentleman a very considerable sum; and he had expressed some displeasure in a letter he wrote me, upon account of my leaving the kingdom, without acquainting him with my design. I own I was unpardonable in not doing it; and the more so, as I was very intimate with his lady and family.

When I waited on the Alderman, he asked me whether I had any engagement at the theatre. To which I answered in the negative; adding, that I could not attempt to make one, till my affairs were settled. He said, it would be very difficult to do that, as the amount of what I owed was more than he believed I thought it. I had made no doubt but that Mr. Calcraft had appropriated the overplus arising from the sale of my jewels to the payment of my debts, as far as it would go, and I concluded that might amount to near four thousand pounds. The workmanship of some of them was so extremely curious, that it must have insured the sale of them, and that at a very good price.

price. There was among them a windmill, which, upon being wound up, went for three hours; and a cap set in a style peculiarly elegant.

How great then was my astonishment, when I was informed by the Alderman, that they had been delivered to Mr. Jeffries, a sword cutler, in the Strand, who had broke them to pieces by order of Mr. Calcraft, and that the money arising from them only amounted to eleven hundred pounds. As I had delivered Mr. Calcraft the receipts, which were for more than six thousand pounds, and they had been purchased of persons of reputation in that business, I could not account for the manœuvre. I therefore desired him to write to Mr. Calcraft upon the subject.

Mr. Cracroft now proceeded to inform me, that he had received a list of my debts from Clifford, (who had left me upon account of her being married,) and that they amounted to ten thousand, three hundred pounds. My courage now forsook me; I had little to hope from Mr. Calcraft, who, in this last instance, had not only shown himself to be cruel, but *dishonest*, in the strictest sense of the word. The Alderman then seemed to hint, at my taking the benefit of an act of insolvency, which was at that time in agitation. I own I never felt myself degraded till that moment. The bare supposition of such

such a step made me so ill, that I was unable for some minutes to answer him.

When I was a little recovered, I informed him that I was incapable of such a thought. In me, I said, it would be the blackest fraud; as mine were debts which had been contracted from extravagant thoughtlessness, and not like those of the fair trader, which were generally the consequences of losses or misfortunes. I added, that I was determined to throw myself upon the mercy of my creditors, to whom, if they would allow me time, I would make all the reparation in my power, by giving up to them the whole of my salary, reserving only my benefit for my own support.

This resolution the alderman applauded in the warmest terms. He said, that he had hinted at the measure, merely to make a trial of my probity. And since I had so nobly scorned to clear myself by such an unjust method, he would draw up for me a letter of licence, which he had no doubt but every creditor, as well as himself, would sign; and not only do that, but afford me support to the utmost of their power. He accordingly fulfilled his promise, and advanced me some money for my present exigencies.

Mr. Rich received me with open arms; and my engagement being signed, I was so far easy. My letter of licence was likewise
signed

signed in a few days by all my creditors but *one*; who declared she would never proceed to any violent measure for the recovery of the debt, but having made a solemn promise never to sign any paper whatever, she could not set her hand to mine.

Mr. Digges I found was gone into Wales to wait for my return; it being inconvenient for him to cross the water, he could not go to Ireland to accompany me the whole way. Whilst he was waiting near the head, (for, from my returning by way of Chester he had missed me,) he was informed that a nobleman had passed through the town, on his way to London, with an actress; being told that the lady was a little black woman, and that she went on seemingly against her consent, Mr. Digges instantly concluded it must be me. He accordingly, like a true Don Quixote, set off after them, in order to rescue his dulcinea from the hands of her ravisher. He could not overtake them till he got to Holywell, where he was informed they were in bed. His fears however were a little alleviated, by hearing that they slept in separate apartments. He waited with the utmost impatience till they arose; when he discovered that the person who had caused this alarm, was no other than Lord Ferrers, who had been to Ireland, to prevent his fugitive sister from going on the stage, and was now returning with her to London. As

the

the description Mr. Digges had received of the lady answered in every particular to mine, the mistake was natural; and happy to find it was not the person he expected, he made directly for town.

Paying a visit one evening to Lady St. Leger, I observed a lady with a pair of my bracelets upon her arms; I could not be deceived, as they had on them the letters G. A. B. in diamonds, and with the same letters likewise in blue enamel, and were set round with brilliants. Maifoneuve had charged me two hundred and forty pounds for them. Having been informed by Mr. Cracrost that all my jewels had been taken to pieces, I could not help observing to the lady, that she did me too much honour in wearing my cypher. Upon which it came out, that Mr. Calcraft had made her a present of them. I further learnt, that my good friend before-mentioned, had received as a present from that gentleman, my best diamond ear-rings, which cost me five hundred and seventy pounds of the same jeweller; together with many other valuable ones; among which was my pink diamond ring, a gem of so rare a kind as not be matched.

Their being sent to a silversmith's to be unset, was now easily accounted for. It is very well known, that pawnbrokers never lend near half their value on diamonds, the fashion of them changing so often. Consequently,

quently, Bibby would not have advanced me two thousand pounds upon what sold for eleven hundred. As soon as I had made this discovery, I ordered a suit to be commenced against Mr. Calcraft for the whole value, which was settled amicably the March following. But that did not annihilate the intended injury.

Can any reflections which may drop from my pen, in the course of these Memoirs, upon the conduct of a man capable of such an act of *dishonesty*, even at the time he was pretending to have the greatest regard for me, be thought to favour too much of asperity? I am too well convinced of your candour, to suppose you will think they do. Nor will the world, I dare say, after they are hereby informed of the truth, which has never till now reached them. The detestation I entertained for him, after such repeated proofs of duplicity, was well founded. And I must surely stand acquitted in the eyes of every impartial person, for not renewing a connection with one, whose heart was fashioned of such stuff, as I have in the preceding pages described it, with the strictest justice, to be.

G. A. B.

all of Gibbons's letters and
all the documents which were ever
written concerning his conduct have now
been committed to the flames. That such
should be done at present is right & proper. L E T -
T

LETTER LXXV.

August 6, 17—

WHEN the season began, I took a house in Jermyn-street ; and by a most fortunate *political* event, I was enabled to live in a degree of elegance little inferior to what I had been accustomed to. Mr. Digges had embarrassed himself, both in England and Scotland, for a woman he had formerly been connected with. This, with our living separately, doubled my expences. And the latter subjected me to solicitations, to which every woman who has been supposed to make one in the *gay* world is liable. A great part of this, I indiscreetly drew upon myself, by not making known to the world the reasons of Calcraft's treacherous conduct. Had I done so, the liberal part of mankind would have pitied me.

Among the competitors for my favour, which were numerous, there was one who actually offered me ten thousand pounds to be admitted as a favoured lover. As the gentleman is now happily married, I will not mention his name ; there are, however, I believe, living vouchers of the truth of this assertion. And here I can safely aver, that, notwithstanding ill nature or envy might have suggested insinuations to the contrary, I

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never,

never, even in thought, deviated from the duty I owed, *as I imagined*, to Mr. Digges, whilst the union between us existed.

Whilst my house in Jermyn-street was fitting up, I continued to sleep at Chelsea, but was in town all day. The drawing-room and best bed-chamber being not yet finished, the upholsterer's man secreted nine yards of damask, a quantity of chintz, and some very fine Dresden china, which were presents. As his honesty had been more than once suspected by his employer, a search warrant was obtained to examine his lodgings. This being carried into execution, the whole of my property, which was very remarkable, was found, but nothing belonging to his master.

The upholsterer was one of the most implacable of men. He came to Chelsea in the evening, whilst I was absent, and by means of threats, so far intimidated my maid, as to prevail upon her to go to the justice's, and swear to the goods which were found. This she did, and was bound over to prosecute in the penalty of forty pounds. But the offender having a very large family, I was so far influenced in his favour by my natural humanity, as to keep my maid from appearing against him. I then set on foot a subscription towards paying the forfeiture of the bond, and I believe I got thirty guines towards it.

In consequence of my maid's not appearing, the man was discharged, and the very same night he called at my house. As I supposed he had no other business with me than to return me thanks for my lenity, and acknowledgments of that nature being most disagreeable to me, I told the servant who brought in his name, that I was busy, and could not see him. Upon which the fellow sent in word, that he *must* see me, or it would be worse for me; for I had compounded felony, and before a few hours were passed, I might be called to answer for it.

I was alarmed at the insult, but not being conversant with the law, I was at a loss to comprehend his meaning. It was therefore necessary to refer to some one for advice. And as I could think of no person, at the time, to consult, but my cousin Crawford, who had taken the benefit of the late insolvent act, and was returned to his chambers and business, I sent for him to settle the affair; and, in the mean while, the ungrateful wretch waited at a neighbouring public house. When Mr. Crawford came, the fellow made a peremptory demand of fifty pounds, which he insisted on being paid immediately, otherwise he would go and lodge an information against me. Finding from my good cousin that there was no redress, I paid the money.

Thus did I become a victim to my humanity, by means of a monster, who de-

served to suffer the severest inflictions of the law for his ingratitude, though he had escaped the due deserts of his dishonesty.—This instance serves to prove, that however strongly humanity might urge to the contrary, the regular prosecution of an offender against the laws of his country, is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to the community.—In such cases, lenity ceases to be a virtue.—A stronger claim than delicacy of feeling calls for a spirited exertion upon these occasions.—The trouble and inconveniences which attend a prosecution, ought to be chearfully submitted to ; and though services rendered our country of this kind, are not attended with so much eclat as those where life is exposed in her defence ; yet they are a duty incumbent on every good citizen, and as deserving of a civic crown.—Justice, indeed, should ever be tempered by moderation, and humanity should always be exerted, whenever prudence does not forbid.

The theatre not opening so soon as was expected, I had leisure to visit, and be visited by, what the world generally denominate friends ; that is, those who will entertain you as long as you are amusing, and are the fashion ; but the moment stern adversity throws her contemptuous robe over you, they no longer are your friends. Like the poor sequestered stag, so pathetically de-

scribed by Shakspere *, “ These *velvet* “ friends abandon you. The careless herd, “ full of the pasture, jump along by you, “ and never stay to greet a poor and broken “ bankrupt.” On the contrary, they join in the cry against you, and accuse you of faults you never committed, in order to excuse themselves from assisting you.

It has often excited my wonder, when I have reflected, how much the word *friendship* is abused, and how it is prostituted in its application, by those who are unacquainted with its meaning. Since adversity has visited me, I have frequently found those whom I have always thought to be endowed with the most refined and liberal sentiments, to be as ready to avoid the person they once affected to admire, and loaded with professions of regard, as the servile herd: and I can with truth affirm, that among the numbers I formerly had it in my power to oblige, I never met with a grateful return but from one gentleman, of whose gratitude I shall give you an account in my future letters. Was I to mention to you some very extraordinary instances which I have it in my power to do, some of my former *nominal* friends would not be very well pleased at the disclosure. But they may sleep in quiet: My injuries, however irritating, shall not

* As You Like it, Act I. Scene II.

impel me to disturb their peace, if peace can ever find a place in an ungrateful mind.

Yet why should I expect to be exempted from the natural consequences of imprudence and distress?—Neglect and censure constantly attend the depressive turn of Fortune's wheel.—It ever was, and ever will be so.—How just and exemplary is the proof my beloved and often-quoted author gives us of this human depravity, in his “Timon of “Athens.””

“ As we do turn our backs
“ From our companion thrown into the grave,
“ So his familiars from his buried fortunes
“ Slunk all away; leaving their false vows with
“ him,
“ Like empty purses pick'd. Whilst his *poor Self*,
“ A dedicated beggar to the air,
“ With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
“ Walk'd, like Contempt, alone.”

As I am upon this topic, let me add, that the many favours for which I am indebted to those, whose humanity has induced them to afford me relief since distress has come upon me, are deeply imprinted on my memory; and the impression, I trust, will ne-

* Act IV. Scene II.

ver be eradicated. Whilst I am condemning ingratitude in others, I would not wish to be guilty of it myself. I would therefore here return my most grateful acknowledgments for the numerous favours I have received, not only from many noble personages, whose virtues add lustre to their high rank, but likewise to the *community* to which I formerly belonged. To them I shall always esteem myself greatly indebted, and assure them it will be the highest happiness I can experience, if ever I have an opportunity to evince my gratitude.

But to return.—Mr. Rich produced, this season, a most superb Representation of a Coronation, in the historical plays of Shakspere. And in order to prevent the principal performers from refusing to appear in the procession, he proposed walking in it *himself*, as Queen's Chamberlain. Unfortunately, however, he was taken ill at the last rehearsal, and never had the pleasure of seeing the grand pageant he had spared no expense to render as magnificent as possible. As I performed in most of the plays, and walked as Queen every night, I had very little leisure to pay any attention to my domestic affairs. I left the conduct of my house entirely to my own maid, having no doubt of her honesty; and supposing the weekly vouchers she brought me in, a sufficient check upon her.

In the month of February, the creditor, who would not sign my letter of licence, called upon me, and requested that I would give her a bond and judgment for the money I owed her. She alledged, in support of her request, that it was a large sum, and in case of my death, my furniture, plate, &c. would secure it to her. As I fully intended to discharge it as soon as possible, I consented to her request, upon condition that the security might be given for no shorter a term than a year. I accordingly called, soon after, at the person's house, and having read the *bond*, which was stipulated for the time mentioned, I signed it; but, being in haste, I very imprudently omitted seeing whether the judgment was of the same date.

In a short time after, I received a letter from the woman, informing me, that she must have immediate payment of the whole money, or else she would put the judgment in force against me. Alarmed at such a dreadful threat, I knew not what course to take. Mr. Digges, being much embarrassed in his affairs, had accepted of an invitation to return to Edinburgh, where he was a great favourite; and there he intended to continue, till I could get my affairs settled, which his presence greatly impeded, as those persons, who were willing to assist me, did not care to do it while he was with me.

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As I had not entertained any apprehensions from this creditor, I had paid many others, whom Mr. Cracrost had pointed out as being in indifferent circumstances. But this woman being opulent, and always professing the greatest friendship and regard for me, I did not suppose she would proceed to violent measures. I however now discovered, that I had put myself in the power of one of the *worst* of women : a woman, who thought nothing wrong that would produce money. I had heard, indeed, that her character was doubtful ; but, as she had never given me the least hint which could authorize suspicion, I imagined the report sprang from ill-nature. I had, notwithstanding, reason to alter my opinion. As she was not only a lace-woman, but dealt in every article necessary for a lady's toilet, it was not doing her any injustice to suppose ladies of easy virtue frequented her house ; but, upon an explanation of her sentiments, I saw I had every thing to dread. It is not improper here to remark, as it was the means of my gaining a suit, which she afterwards instituted against me for the recovery of the money, that, in a letter she sent me, she informed me that the bond was for a *year*, but the judgment for a *month*. And her brother, to make the letter more forcible, swore by his Maker, that they *had bit me*. Through this expression, and the palpable deception

which had been made use of upon the occasion, I was enabled to triumph over such a dangerous opponent.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXVI.

Aug. 14, 17—

MR. Calcraft being one evening at the representation of "Zara," the uncommon applause I met with revived his passion, and induced him to make use of every method he could devise to bring about a reconciliation. Having watched me one Sunday, he came up to me in Derby-court, and earnestly entreated that I would favour him with half an hour's conversation. Upon my refusal, he begged that if I would not be reconciled to him, I would attend to a proposal he had to make me, which would accommodate the disagreeable affair relative to the diamonds. This also I refused to do, assuring him, at the same time, that I would not hold any correspondence with him whatever.

Upon this he went to a tavern, the corner of York-street, and I really believe I received twenty letters from him in a short time. Finding me still inflexible, he sent Nurse Carter to me; the person I have mentioned before, who lived with me many years,

years, and brought up all my children. This good woman, he knew, had great influence over me, and therefore he was in hopes she would remove my prepossessions. But they were too deeply rooted; particularly as he had offered me a fresh insult, by getting a friend to deliver me a message, of an extraordinary nature, just after my return from Ireland. This aggravation of his injuries, will be fully explained in the letter already hinted at, which I shall give you, by way of Appendix to my "Apology," as I was then obliged to suppress the publication of it, for reasons assigned in their proper place:

Nurse Carter executed her commission with great fidelity to her employer. And at last, wearied out with her importunities, I told her, that if Mr. Calcraft would write me his proposals of accommodation, or send his attorney to me, I would hear what they were, and consult Mr. Cracroft upon the propriety of accepting them. He accordingly sent them by one of his clerks. They contained the following articles: That he would give me money to pay off Mr. Sparks's bond for four hundred pounds. That he would compromise all my debts with my creditors, if I would consent to go abroad till it was done, as none of them would accept of less than the whole of their demand whilst I was upon the spot. And

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lastly,

lastly, he would grant me an additional annuity of one hundred pounds; which, with the twenty pounds surplus of the former, he said, would enable me to live in Holland or France till the affair was finished.

Having consulted Mr. Cracraft upon the subject, I wrote to Mr. Stubbs, senior, who still lives in Parliament-street, informing him that I would accept of his client's proposals. That gentleman, accordingly, waited upon me with the bond of annuity for the additional hundred a year, which was in trust to Nicholas Linwood, Esq; of Broad-street, wine-merchant, a partner with Clermont and Co. Mr. Stubbs, at the same time, brought with him a general release for me to sign; but this, as an honest man, he advised me not to do. As I could not, however, have any legal demand upon Mr. Calcraft, the suit with Mr. Davy relative to the former annuity being still pending, I delivered up the marriage contract given upon our union, and signed the release. Having disposed of the hundred a year out of the former annuity to all *intents and purposes*, till the sum which I had received should be repaid, with fifty pounds besides, as I have already observed, it is not to be supposed that by signing the release I gave a receipt for what was not mine to dispose of. The release is now in the hands of Mr. Stubbs, junior, of Suffolk-street, Charing-cross.

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The same evening the deeds were signed, I set off for Harwich, in my way to Holland. I have omitted to inform you, that upon the conversation I had held with my rigorous female creditor, from which I obtained a knowledge of her purposes, I indiscreetly left my house, and went to my mother's in Brewer-street; having first sent my plate to Alderman Cracraft's, as a security for his debt. The companion of my journey was Miss Betty Cibber, who had been left me as a legacy by her grandfather, Colley Cibber. As her intellects were rather weak, and she was liable to fall a prey to every designing person who flattered her, that celebrated old gentleman consigned her to my care; and he left all his grand-children as legacies to different persons. A son of Mrs. Smith, whom I have formerly mentioned, being a surgeon, I had got him to officiate to a regiment. This young man, likewise, accompanied my flight.

When we got to Harwich, the wind being contrary, we were prevented from sailing; and as I was apprehensive of being pursued by my inflexible creditor, I thought it prudent to go to Manningtree, a village at some distance from Harwich, to remain there till the wind changed. My benefit was to be on the Monday following, which would render it impossible to keep my departure any longer a secret.

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The Thursday evening, as we were at supper, we heard a chaise and four enter the inn, and presently, to my infinite surprize, Mr. Digges made his appearance. This, you may be assured, was not the most agreeable *rencontre*. He appeared to be greatly enraged, and insisted on my two companions returning to London, and on my immediately getting into another chaise, and quitting the house. I was so terrified by the violence of his temper, that I consented to his injunctions, on condition that he did not carry me to Edinburgh. I had somehow or other taken an unaccountable aversion to that place, but without being able to assign any reason for it.

We travelled, side by side, not in the best temper with each other, without pursuing any fixed route; and when we arrived at Cambridge, I had fresh cause of distress. Some rhyming Cantab had defaced the windows of the inn, where we put up, with some lines in my favour. This added fuel to the flame which was already blazing in his bosom. And, as “Trifles light as air, are to the jealous, confirmation strong, as proofs of holy writ *,” he thought he had found fresh reason to accuse me of levity.

But his attention was in some measure taken off from these disquiet thoughts by an unexpected incident. Taking up a news-

* Othello, Act III. Scene VI.

paper which lay in the room, I observed in it an advertisement, which was too particularly pointed, for me to doubt that it related to myself. It ran thus; "If the lady, who left a near relation's on such a day, with a young gentlewoman and gentleman, will return; that relation has in possession a larger deposit than will serve to accommodate the disagreeable affair, which occasioned her to leave London."

Upon reading this intelligence, I insisted on immediately returning back to London. To which Mr. Digges consented. But when we got to Edmonton, he determined to leave me there, and go to the capital by himself, to enquire into the circumstances of the affair. He accordingly set out, whilst I pleased myself with the hopes of being there as soon as him. But, upon my ordering a post-chaise, the man of the house informed me, that he had received positive directions from the gentleman not to let me have a carriage, nor even suffer me to leave the house. Patience was my only resource; though, I own, I cannot constitutionally make that virtue my boast.

When my good man returned, he informed me, that my mother was so enraged at my not coming back before, supposing I must have seen the advertisement, that she had determined to refund the money deposited in her hands; and to sell the furniture of my house,

house, in order to pay Mrs. Jordan, my milliner, who was her intimate friend. I entreated Mr. Digges to suffer me to go to my mother, that I might try to prevail upon her to alter her resolution. But my entreaties were ineffectual. Notwithstanding the vexation I felt at the time, from this obstinate refusal, I must do him the justice to say, that I believe he was influenced by no other motive than pure regard. He had engaged to go back to Scotland. He had likewise great reason to suppose, that, from his being so much involved, he should not be able to continue in London, should he break that engagement. Besides, it was natural for him to conclude, that the deposit was conditionally lodged with my mother, the nature of our attachment being unknown. All these reasons induced him to insist on my staying with him.

We then once more sat out, without having any fixed place to go to. When we got to Barton Mills, an inn on the Norwich road, I was taken very ill. Here he left me, and went again to London; I believe, to enquire whether my mother had carried her threats into execution; and he found she had done it immediately. I was now left in a very disagreeable situation; and, for the first time in my life, was apprehensive of knowing the want of money for my present exigencies. All my wardrobe had been put on board

board the pacquet at Harwich, so that I had no apparel with me but a few shifts, my night-dress, and the travelling habit I had on. To pay my expences when I got to Holland, I had procured bills and letters of credit from Mr. Colley, an acquaintance of my mother's, upon merchants at Antwerp and the Hague, at which places I intended taking up my residence alternately. But these were now of no service to me.

In this situation, we turned our horses heads towards the North; and when we came to Preston, in Lancashire, the money I had with me was nearly expended. Nothing was now to be done, but for Mr. Digges to go on to Edinburgh. This he did, leaving me at a village, the name of which I have forgot, about twenty miles short of it; as I had insisted on his not taking me to that place, agreeable to the promise he had made me.

In two days after he left me, a post-chaise came to convey me on to the Grass Market, as the driver told me. This I supposed to be a town which was called by that name, and accordingly went with him. When I arrived at an inn in the Cannon Gate, a woman waited for me, of a most extraordinary figure. She was very lusty; had been handsome; was intolerably dirty; had on a Dutch cap, with a plaid round her shoulders; and was without stays. She informed me, in the Scotch accent, that her name was Molly Kershaw,

Kershaw, a particular friend of my spouse's, and that she came to conduct me to my apartments. I told her, I hoped they were not in Edinburgh. She declared, they were not, but at Miss Coulstone's, a person who was genteel as well as myself, though she took in plain-work. She acquainted me, that she had ordered dinner at the inn where we were, particularly a very fine *turbot*, which she dwelt much upon. I had but little appetite at any time; and indisposition, fatigue, and fretting, had not increased it. But, to my great surprise, when the boasted dinner appeared, the very fine turbot proved to be a large piece of coarse thornback.

Between six and seven o'clock in the evening, a coach came to convey me to my apartments. When we arrived, after having mounted three pair of stairs, the ground-floor of which was a chandler's shop, I was introduced to the genteel Miss Coulstone. This lady appeared to be an old maid of about sixty years of age, and looked as if she had been smoke-dried. She was the very counter-part of the old woman in "Rule a Wife and have a Wife."

The sound of music now reached my ears. Upon my enquiring from whence it came, I was answered, from the theatre, which was directly opposite. From this I learnt, that the Cannon Gate, where the chaise had set me down, was the suburbs to the city of Edinburgh,

Edinburgh, into which I had thus, through my ignorance of the country, been decoyed. I no sooner made the discovery than I took a pair of scissars, and cut my hair off, quite close to my head, to prevent my being solicited to appear in public.

The piece which was performing was the "Beggar's Opera," in which my gentleman acted Macheath, a part he was esteemed very capital in. After the opera, he hastened to me, when he informed me, that the English papers having announced my absence, it was conjectured, that the new-comer at Miss Coulstone's was the very fugitive that had lately deserted her situation at Covent-Garden.

The next day, Mr. Bates, joint proprietor of the Edinburgh theatre with Mr. Dawson, and acting manager, acquainted Mr. Digges, that it would be useless to open the doors, unless he could induce me to appear upon their stage. I could not possibly conceive how my arrival could be so soon discovered. For, to prevent all suspicion, it was not to be known that Mr. Digges had attended me down, and he was to reside at his own lodgings.

Our journey had been expensive. I had but little money left, and Mr. Digges less; for the bills I had upon Holland, were of no use to me here. In this situation, there was no other alternative but my conforming to Mr. Bates's wishes. The loss of my hair was

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the greatest bar to my appearance. However, for the first time, I had recourse to false; and, as I had not even necessaries, I was obliged to have clothes made at a great expence. But my success was so much beyond expectation, that I was very well enabled to do this. Curiosity induced families to come from all parts of the country.

The season being so far advanced, eight nights were to be the limited number of my performing, and the last was to be for my benefit. The morning of that day I was arrested by the creditor, who had been the occasion of my indiscreet flight from London. I was, however, soon set at liberty, the caption being against the laws of Scotland, which allow some days notice to debtors before they can be taken.

Upon this occasion, the first lawyers in the kingdom were volunteers in my cause; particularly Mr. Montgomery, afterwards Chief Baron, and the Dean of the Faculty. It at length came to trial; and the letter I formerly mentioned, was produced, from which it plainly appeared, that the security was fraudulently obtained. And the courts of justice in Scotland, being at the same time courts of equity, a verdict was given in my favour. Having thus defeated the iniquitous designs of my creditor, she consented to receive her debt by instalments of two hundred pounds a year. After this my other creditors, particularly

Mr.

Mr. Alderman Cracrost and Doctor Baillie, to whom I was indebted in considerable sums, joined in recommending me to that personal protection, which they knew was to be had in Scotland.

As good frequently springs from evil, this misfortune seemed to be the means of procuring me the attention and civility I met with, in so eminent a degree, during my residence in this kingdom. In particular, it procured me the happiness of being admitted into the family of Mr. Montgomery, upon the most intimate footing, of which I shall always have the most grateful sense. The most attached patronesses I had, besides those of the Montgomery family, which were numerous, were the Dutches of Douglas, and the Miss Elphinstones. The latter were partial to me to a degree of enthusiasm. Lord Ruthven likewise honoured me with his support.

The ensuing season I was to have a third of the profits, with two benefits; and Mr. Digges a weekly salary. As Mr. Calcraft seemed to think that Scotland was *abroad*, he regularly paid my late granted annuity to Mr. Speediman, proprietor of the stomachic pills in the Strand. Mr. Digges now took a house at Bonnington, a very pleasant village, near Edinburgh. Our success at the theatre was very great, and we could have saved money, had not the debts my gentleman

man had contracted upon account of the person he formerly lived with, embarrassed him greatly.

About this time I was much surprized to receive a letter from Mr. Ballard, treasurer of Covent Garden theatre, containing a demand for a capital sum. He informed me, that Mr. Rich's executors had made him account for the salary, paid me three years before, during the shutting of the house, upon account of the demise of one of the female branches of the Royal Family. My agreement was *annual*, and Mr. Rich had expressly ordered the treasurer not to make any deduction for that vacation. But as Mr. Ballard had not taken the order in writing, he was liable to pay it. As I had received the money, I could by no means consent that he should refund it. Common honesty required, in my idea, that he should not be the sufferer. I therefore wrote to Alderman Cracrost, desiring he would settle it, as well as he could, to the satisfaction of the treasurer.

At this period my mother, together with all my paraphernalia, which was returned from Holland, sent down to me a young gentlewoman, that, she imagined, would make some figure upon the stage. Her name was Wordley. She had an uncommon flow of spirits, and had received a more liberal education than is usually bestowed on English women in the middle line of life.

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Her father was steward to the Earl of Powys, and he had spared no pains to cultivate the mind of this daughter, who was his favourite, and whose genius led her to receive his instructions with pleasure. So accomplished a young woman was to be considered as a valuable acquisition, as well as doing honour to my mother's recommendation. I therefore requested her to take up her residence at Bonnington.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXVII.

August 22, 17—

UPON looking forward to the number of incidents it will be needful yet to relate, to give you a perfect view of this chequered life of mine, and to let the world into the sources of those actions which in many instances have drawn upon me *unmerited* censure; I see they will much exceed the bounds I imagined, when I first sat down to record them.—Circumstance grows from circumstance—and recollection receives additional vigour from the exercise of it—I therefore cannot help being apprehensive, that notwithstanding the assurances you have so often given me to the contrary, the relation of them will prove tedious to you.—This apprehension, however, will be a curb to me, and prevent me

me from inserting any incidents that are not immediately conducive to the purposes for which I entered upon it; namely, to satisfy your curiosity, and to endeavour to remove those prejudices the public have imbibed against me, *from not knowing the whole of my story.* And I shall of course make my digressions as short and unfrequent as possible.

Mr. Digges did every thing in his power to make me happy. He indulged me with every pleasure he could procure for me. But my temper was so much soured by the continual demands for the debts he had contracted before my union with him, that I could not relish any enjoyment, or behave towards him with that complacency I could have wished.

About the middle of the season he informed me, that he had received a letter, acquainting him that his brother, Capt. Dudley Digges, was arrived in England, and that he wished much to see him, upon some family concerns. He therefore determined to set off to visit his brother, and we were obliged to manage in the theatre as well as we could. But how to procure money for the expences of his journey was the question. This Mr. Still, my attorney, and indeed my factotum, upon my application to him, advanced.

When Mr. Digges arrived in London, my mother was soon reconciled to him, and he remained at her house during his stay. Upon his return, he presented me with a large silver repeater,

repeater, to be placed at the head of my bed, as I had often wished for a machine of that kind, to know the hours when I was to take the medicines my indifferent state of health rendered necessary.

There was a young gentlewoman in the company for whom I had a great attachment, the wife of Mr. Aickin, of Drury-lane theatre. But death soon robbed me of her. This event affected me much, and made my health, which was but indifferent before, still more so. It therefore became needful to find out some performer, who could relieve me from the constant fatigue I underwent. And I met with Mrs. Kennedy, with whom I had formerly played during my first excursion to Dublin.

This lady, her husband, and their son, were accordingly engaged at a salary, which Edinburgh would by no means afford. But what was to be done! my playing constantly was impracticable; and no person could supply my place, unless they had acquired some reputation. The proprietors were therefore obliged to consent to the engagement, notwithstanding the expence was so great. Mrs. Kennedy had merit in some parts; and as she had been in several travelling companies, she was studied in every character. Though she was far from handsome, she was a good figure.

Our views, however, in engaging her, were frustrated by indisposition. She was taken ill soon after her arrival; and a dreadful eruption

appearing in her face, she was able to perform but four times during the whole season. A ridiculous circumstance happened in consequence, which, if it strikes you, as it did me and the whole audience, at the time, it will at least excite a smile.

Mrs. Kennedy thinking herself so well recovered, as to be able to perform, she sent word that she was able to appear in Zara, in the "Mourning Bride," which was to be acted for the benefit of some particular person she wished to befriend. But about four o'clock on the day of performance, she was taken so very ill, that her appearance was impracticable. The piece was to be played by particular desire, and there was no substitute to be got for so capital a part, nor a possibility of changing it. In this dilemma, Mrs. Farrel, Mrs. Kennedy's sister, who was about twenty years older than that lady, and was a person who used to figure away in old nurses, undertook to play the part.

The audience expressed marks of disapprobation throughout the whole of her playing, but particularly so when she died. Upon which she rose from between the mutes, and advancing towards the front of the stage, she told the audience, that she was concerned she could not acquit herself so as to give satisfaction; but as good nature had induced her to undertake the part, merely to serve the person whose benefit it was, she hoped they would excuse it. Having

ing finished her speech, she hastened to the place from whence she had risen, and threw herself down again between the mutes, who covered her face with the veil. So uncommon an incident had such an effect upon the risible muscles of the whole audience, as well as myself, who was just entering as Almeria, that it was impossible to compose them for the rest of the evening.

This puts me in mind of a similar laughable adventure that once befel Mrs. Hamilton. That lady, playing the character of Arpasia in "Tamerlane," and being very lusty, the scene-men found great difficulty to lift the chair into which she had thrown herself, upon her supposed death. Which she observing, she ordered them to set it down, and making her courtesy to the audience, walked off as coolly as if she was not to be supposed dead.

The letters I received, during the time I presided at the Edinburgh theatre, from itinerant players applying to be engaged, amounted to an incredible number. They generally wrote in such a style, as to shew they all thought themselves Garricks and Cibbers.

The ensuing season the honourable Mrs. Digges died, which made it necessary for her son to go to England. She left eight thousand pounds between her two sons, upon condition that the elder should quit the stage, and take her maiden name of West. Mr. Digges communicated this news to me whilst I was at

the theatre ; and I received a letter from my mother by the same post, to hasten his journey. The races were to be the ensuing week, which is usually the harvest of the season. Money, however, must be immediately raised for his expences. I therefore left the repeating watch with Mr. Still for seventeen guineas, and I believe consented that he should take ten or fifteen from the office. I could not spare any more, as in a few days I should want the two hundred which I had agreed to pay to my inflexible creditor.

Mr. Digges then set off for England, with a promise of returning as soon as possible. But as he was not to play in future, that was immaterial. At the conclusion of the week, I sent to Mr. Still for the two hundred pounds; and received for answer, that he had not a shilling, as he had given Mr. Digges all the money in his possession, and he was two hundred pounds in his debt.

My distraction upon receiving this intelligence is hardly to be conceived. I had requested Mr. Ferguson, my creditor's attorney, to dine with me at Bonnington, the day the money was due, when I would pay him. Very fortunately for me, that gentleman possessed the most liberal mind, and was an honour to his profession. Miss Wordley having acquainted him with the real situation of my affairs, for I was too much distressed to do it myself, he agreed to allow me three months to raise

the money ; and that his client might not be dissatisfied, he remitted her the sum, and took the debt upon himself. So remarkable an instance of humanity claimed my warmest thanks. It was likewise productive of the most heartfelt regret to me. For upon being informed, some years after, that this amiable young man was one of the persons who lost their lives by the falling of the bridge at Edinburgh, I sincerely lamented the unfortunate disaster.

Whilst I had been an inhabitant of Parliament-street, (a period pregnant with sorrows,) I had recommended a gentleman, who wrote a very fine hand, to Mr. Calcraft, as a clerk.

About two years after this, he informed me, that he had an opportunity of going to the East-Indies in a very advantageous situation ; assuring me, at the same time, that he should ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favours he had received from me ; which his future conduct testified that he did.

This gentleman, whose name is Hearne, made many enquiries after me, upon his return to England, and casually hearing of my distress, whilst I was at Edinburgh, he most generously sent me two hundred pounds. This was the most acceptable favour I ever received, as it shewed the gratitude of the donor. Of which I shall have occasion to say more in the course of my narrative.

I must not omit mentioning another event of a similar nature, which likewise happened about

this time. I had formerly had a servant, named Daniel Douglas. He lived with me about nine years. But at length, from the gentleman's gallantries in the family, the maids being all partial to him, I recommended him as a domestic to Lord Hume, then governor of Gibraltar. His Lordship made him his major-domo; and Daniel behaved so much to the satisfaction of his master, that he left him something handsome when he died.

I had been informed that a Mr. Douglas had called at my house several times, when I happened not to be at home. One day, as I was going up the Castle-hill, I was accosted by a person whose face was familiar to me, though I could not recollect him. The poor fellow burst into tears, and having made himself known to me, and enquired after my health, &c. he begged I would permit him to speak to me for a few minutes the first leisure I had, as he was detained in Edinburgh by no other business. I appointed that afternoon to see him at my house, and could not imagine what the business he wished to speak to me upon was; for though I had always endeavoured to deserve the regard of my domestics, I never had been particularly kind to him.

When he came, he informed me that he had saved up eleven hundred pounds. That his wife had taken an inn upon the Dover road, for which, upon being put into possession, they were to pay seven hundred. He then said, he hoped

I would

I would forgive his presumption in what he was about to say, but as he was afraid I was not in such circumstances as formerly, if I would be so good as to make use, for my own time, of the remainder of the little fortune I had been the means of his getting, it would afford him more real pleasure than he could receive from disposing of it in any other way.

I could scarcely refrain from tears, at the manner in which this offer was made. It seemed rather as if he had been soliciting a loan than offering a favour. I thanked him cordially for his intended kindness, but declined accepting it; assuring him at the same time, that I did not do so from being hurt at the offer, which gave me singular pleasure, but because I had lately received from Mr. Hearne, whom he well knew, the assistance I then wanted. I added, that I could not think of borrowing the money he had laboured many years for, without being certain of repaying it, even if I was actually pressed for it; I consequently would not contract a debt of such a nature, when I really had no immediate occasion. The worthy man reluctantly acquiesced with this declaration, and took his leave, in appearance as much mortified at the refusal of his money, as others would have been, at being dunned for it.

This grateful behaviour of my late servant Daniel, only wants the decorations of Shakspere's immortalizing pen, to make it as memorable as that of Adam in his "As you like it." —

it." — The honesty and friendship of that venerable servant towards *the memory of old Sir Rowland*, as he terms Orlando, when represented by Berry, with that honest plainness, and unaffected sensibility, which was never equalled by any other performer, could not affect the weeping audience more than this well-meant offer of Daniel's did me. The impression will never be eradicated from my mind. And that infinitely more from the *manner* in which the favour was tendered, and the grateful intention of it, than from the service such a sum at that time could have been to me. These were the only two instances of gratitude, among the numerous opportunities I gave for the exertion of it, that ever I met with. But these are sufficient to convince me, that the virtue has an existence, though like the phoenix, its appearance is very rare.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

August 29, 17—

UPON my first engaging at Edinburgh, the gentlemen of Glasgow offered to build a theatre by subscription, if our company would promise to perform there in the summer. To this we readily consented, as the inhabitants were not only opulent, but

but liberal to a degree. The theatre being now ready, we formed very agreeable ideas of the jaunt; and that, not only from the views of profit that it presented, but from the favourable ideas we entertained of the place and people. The goddes of Nonsense (for so we had nicknamed Miss Wordley, from her being directly the reverse) was impatient beyond measure for our removal from the metropolis. I had lately left Bonnington, and resided in the city, as the business of the theatre required my being near it; and upon this occasion, David Hume complimented me with his apartments in the Canningate.

When we were about to set off, after having discharged my bills, I found I had not cash sufficient to defray the expences of the journey; my family consisting of myself, Miss Wordley, and three servants. The chaises were ordered, and expected soon to be at the door. Not knowing how to raise any money upon this emergency, I sent one of my women, whose name was Waterstone, to a watch-maker's in the High-street, to dispose of the silver repeater Mr. Digges had given me. The person I directed her to apply to, had gained a reputation, by making several for that great mechanical genius, the Duke of Argyll.

The chaises were now at the door; and I waited with the greatest impatience for the

arrival of the money to enable us to set off. Some hours elapsed without any tidings of my messenger. Her honesty I could not suspect. Her stay therefore could not be accounted for. About four in the afternoon, a person, dressed something like one of our beadles, came to inform me, that a woman belonging to me, was detained about a watch she had offered to sell.

This intelligence crowned my misfortunes. I sent back the chaises which were yet in waiting, and desired Mr. Still would go to regain the poor woman her liberty. When that gentleman got to the watchmaker's, he was informed, that Mr. Digges had purchased the watch of the very person I sent it to. It being invaluable upon account of the workmanship, but from the largeness of its size not very saleable, he had sold it to Mr. Digges somewhat under the mark, and had taken his note for it, payable at the conclusion of the season.

The man said, as he understood Mr. Digges did not intend to return, and as the watch was offered for sale, suspicions arose in his mind that it was not honestly come by; especially as the woman refused leaving it, or telling from whom she came. Mr. Still having thus learnt the circumstances of the affair, to accommodate it as well as he could, returned the repeater to its first owner, upon his invitation.

his agreeing to deliver up Mr. Digges's note, and liberating my servant.

My friendly negotiator then went to endeavour to raise me a fund that should enable me to set out for Glasgow the next morning, it being necessary that we should no longer defer going. He brought me sufficient for the expences of half the journey, and I was obliged to depend upon the purses of my partners for defraying the remainder. Miss Wordley's humour kept my spirits from sinking under all these vexations; and the gloom which overclouded my mind, seemed gradually to dispel every mile we went. So that before we had made much progress in our journey, I assumed a cheerfulness to which I had long been a stranger.

The next day at noon, we saw the delightful city to which we were going, at a little distance before us. The magnificence of the buildings, and the beauty of the river, which the fineness of the day caused to appear, if possible, to greater advantage, elated my heart; and I anticipated the pleasure I should have in being received by friends, who were not only most cordial in their repeated invitations, but whose opulence furnished them with power to fulfil their warm promises of support.

When we arrived at Glasgow, one of the performers exclaimed, "Madam, you are ruined, for you have nothing left but what you have with you in the chaises." I am

at a loss, even now, to account for the composure with which I heard this alarming salutation, for I enquired into the cause of it without the least emotion. I was informed, that the stage of the New Theatre had been set on fire the night before, and that all my paraphernalia and wardrobe, which lay there unpacked, had been consumed by the flames.

The conflagration, I found, was occasioned by the following circumstance. A Methodist teacher, who held forth in that city, told his auditors, that he dreamed, the preceding night, he was in the infernal regions, at a grand entertainment, where all the Devils in Hell were present, when Lucifer their chief gave for a toast, the health of Mr. ——, who had sold his ground to build him a house upon, (meaning the theatre) and which was to be opened the next day for them all to reign in.

The poor ignorant enthusiastic hearers of this godly preacher, found their enmity against Satan and his subjects instantly inflamed by this harangue; and in order to prevent so alarming an extension of his infernal majesty's empire, they hastened away in a body to the new built play-house, and set the stage on fire. Luckily the flames were extinguished, before any other part of the theatre was consumed, but the whole of my theatrical wardrobe, which lay in the packages upon it, were destroyed. It appeared, that this religious mob had

had been joined by others, who wished to take advantage of the conflagration; as a great deal of the false trumpery upon the regalia of the mock kings and queens, had been taken away, and, being found of no value, lay scattered about the fields. As the theatre was a mile from the city, and the flames did not burst out so as to become visible, the incendiaries compleated their design, and silently retired. No alarm was therefore given, nor our loss known till the next morning.

Notwithstanding the intelligence I now received was of the utmost importance to me, I heard it with great tranquillity. But poor Miss Wordley, who had lost her little all, lost with it all that philosophy, she, on many former occasions, had preached up to me. Which recalled to my memory these fine lines of Shakspere *;

—Men,

Can counsel, and give comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage.

—Tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;

* Much Ado about Nothing, " Act V. Scene I."

But —

But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,

To be so moral when he should endure

The like himself.—

Instead of throwing myself into violent agitations, and lamenting my loss, as many would have done, I very coolly said, I would go and look at the ruins; and ordered the chaise to drive immediately to the theatre. I there beheld the ashes of all my finery, which had cost many, many hundreds of pounds; and, at that time, upon a moderate computation, were worth nine hundred; there being among them a complete set of garnets and pearls, from cap to stomacher.

When I returned to the inn, I enquired for Mr. Bates; for, as to the other partner, I never had any knowledge of him. I was informed that he was gone to the Exchange, to offer a reward for discovering the incendiaries. But all his endeavours to that purpose were vain. The native firmness of the Caledonians insure their fidelity to each other. For in this affair, as well as that of Captain Porteus, in which, by all accounts, many hundreds were concerned, there was not one person found treacherous enough to give evidence against their partners, relative to the excesses they had been guilty of.

The postillions were obliged to wait the return of Mr. Bates, as it was not in my power to discharge them. When he came,

and

and had sent the chaises away, I desired he would go back to the Exchange, and inform every person he saw, that I was fully determined not to make my appearance upon the Glasgow stage, unless I did so the next evening, according to the plan I had fixed, but which it was not in my power to do for want of clothes. Upon which, one of the principal merchants of the city, by whose interest, chiefly, the theatre had been built, came immediately to the inn, and politely offered me whatever money I wanted. I cheerfully accepted his friendly assistance, and upon my repeating the resolution I had formed, he told me, I should have all the ladies' clothes in and about the city, before the evening, if we could get the stage repaired; so that should be no hindrance to us.

It being impracticable for us to perform a Tragedy, as the necessary dresses could not be got ready for some days, we determined to perform "The Citizen," by way of play, and "The Mock Doctor" for the farce. Mr. Bates instantly got some industrious carpenters, who nailed down boards for a temporary stage, (the other being entirely consumed) which they covered with carpets, till the damage could be repaired. And before six o'clock, the gentleman so well performed his promise, that from not being mistress of one gown, I found myself in possession of above forty, and some of these almost new.

as well as very rich. Nor did the ladies confine themselves to outward garments only. I received presents of all kinds, and from every part of the adjacent country, together with invitations and parties for the whole time of my residence in their neighbourhood.

Every thing was ready by the usual hour, and we played the two pieces just mentioned, to a crowded house. At the conclusion of the piece, one of the principal ladies declared from the boxes, that none of the audience would stir, till all the performers, and even the servants, were safely out of the theatre; lest there might be some personal attack attempted, by those who could commit such an outrage as that of the preceding evening; and the town guard was ordered to escort us into the city.

The capital inhabitants made parties to entertain us; and I can truly say, that I never met with more civility, more festivity, nor more applause, in any place wherever I appeared. Mr. Reddish was the principal man in tragedy, Mr. Aickin in comedy. Whilst I was at Edinburgh, I had prevailed upon a gentleman, who was possessed of some talents, to compile a little piece from the celebrated poem of Offran; and I appeared in the character of Commela, there, with great success. But at Glasgow the applause I received was beyond all bounds. This little piece alone, tacked to any indifferent comedy, would fill the house, so that it was crowded every night;

night; which tended greatly to relieve me from the fatigue I daily underwent, not only from the duties of my profession, but from the constant round of invitations I was obliged to accept of.

"Macbeth" and "Douglas" were much called for; but these pieces could not be performed, till clothes proper for appearing in them were made and brought from Edinburgh. As I had no black vestment of any kind sent to me among the numerous ones of different colours, which had been showered upon me by the ladies, I made that an objection to playing the character of Lady Macbeth. Upon which, I was assured by one of the inhabitants, that her Ladyship walked every night, at the castle of Dunsinane, dressed in *white* fattin. Not being able to refrain from smiling at this piece of information, I was told, with great seriousness, that it was really a *fact*; of the truth of which I might be convinced, by watching one night only at the castle. I rather chose, however, to give credit to the person from whom I received the account, than be at the trouble of putting the assertion to the test; and played the character, out of the usual form, in white fattin.

On the fourth of June there was to be a grand dinner at the Bull Inn, in honour of the day. At this inn I had taken up my residence, from the fulness of the town, and

its

its being situated near the theatre. What made this place of abode the more desirable was, its being an immense, commodious building, capable of accommodating us in every respect. It had been erected by subscription for the reception of the gentlemen belonging to the hunt, in the winter; and in the summer for the people of fashion who live in the environs, and come, at that season, occasionally to Glasgow. There was likewise a large room in it, which in winter was a free mason's lodge. This now served us for a wardrobe:

Miss Wordley seemed frantic with joy at some news she had received from Edinburgh, which induced me to follow her to enquire the cause. When she informed me, that she had heard Mr. Woodward was arrived in that city. On hearing this pleasing intelligence, we prevailed upon Mr. Bates to set off immediately to invite him to join us.

While the rubbish that had been occasioned by the fire was removing, we set about searching to see if we could recover any part of the valuable things I had lost; when, to my great joy and surprize, I found among some of it which the first waggon could not contain, a trunk belonging to me. In it were deposited some clothes, a great deal of linen, and some of my laces. But the chief part of the latter were consumed during

during the burning of the stage, together with all the trinkets I had of any value. This, however, was a great acquisition, and afforded me the more pleasure, as it was given over for lost.

We had the mortification to find, that the report of Mr. Woodward's being arrived in Scotland was without foundation. This was a disappointment to us indeed. For as this gentleman's character in private life was as amiable, as his public one was celebrated, he would have proved a valuable acquisition in a country, where something more than theatrical merit is necessary to insure approbation.

As the summer drew towards a conclusion, I saw, with infinite regret, the time approach for our return to Edinburgh. There had been an execution in our house at Bonnington, for a debt Mr. Digges had left unpaid. I had, therefore, no settled habitation to go to. But it was not solely on this account, that I regretted leaving Glasgow; the hospitality and friendship I had received from the inhabitants during my stay, had made an indelible impression upon my mind.

Besides, the beauty of the place and of the country around it, are extremely captivating. The meadow, in particular, is beyond description picturesque and charming. It reminds every one that has seen the beautiful village

village of Haerlem, of the near resemblance of one to the other. On one side of the river, you see the City Bleaching-houses, where multitudes are employed in the different avocations of the linen trade. Some washing, others attending the coppers, and others laying the linen to bleach. On the other side the cattle are grazing in a most delightful pasture, which terminates in a landscape much beyond any description it is in my power to give of it.

We had likewise the pleasure to observe, that our departure was as much regretted by our hospitable entertainers, as we felt ourselves mortified by the separation from them. And it is with the most sensible satisfaction I reflect, that there was not one member of our company, who did not depart without credit to themselves, and honour to the profession.

Upon my return to Edinburgh I took a small English house in the Cannongate. But finding Mr. Bates had entered into an engagement with Mr. Sheridan, without my knowledge or consent, a liberty diametrically opposite to our agreement, I declined appearing any more. An event which proved of greater consequence to the proprietors, than they had imagined it would; as I afterwards found they played to their loss every night.

Having

Having come to this resolution, I determined to return to London as soon as I conveniently could. And my departure was accelerated by a very unexpected discovery. Another of those revolutions of fortune which had so frequently been my lot, now awaited me. Having one day received a letter from Mr. Digges, now West, with a demand for a larger sum than I could spare, I could not help being much affected whilst I read it. Upon which, a gentleman, who happened to be present, told me, he was well assured the union that had taken place between Mr. Digges and me could not be valid, as to his knowledge a former wife was still living. Being alarmed at this information, and doubting the truth of it, the gentleman promised to send me well-authenticated proofs of it as soon as he got to London, for which place he was just setting off.

Accordingly I received, soon after, an affidavit, confirming the truth of this assertion, by which I was again set at liberty; and found, as I had done more than once, an union I thought to be *indissoluble*, suddenly dissolved. The gentleman at the same time informed me, that he had seen Mrs. Digges, who told him that she had announced her death in the public papers, in order to deceive her husband, by whom she was apprehensive of being molested.

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She might have spared herself the trouble and expence of such a manœuvre, as I am very certain he never meant to see her after their separation, his affections being at that time *really* fixed upon another person. I must here stop to declare; that I acquit Mr. Digges of any *intended* deception toward me. Had he not been unfortunately embarrassed in his circumstances by a former connection, the delicacy of his tenderness, and the unremitting attention he always paid me, would have prevented my having the least cause of complaint.

By what a chain of sand do all the hopes of poor blind mortals hang! — Take what steps we will to render it durable, even those which are apparently the result of prudence, and they cannot insure permanency to it.— Some unexpected stroke breaks the conjecture, and our most sanguine expectations are scattered by the winds.— No woman has surely so much reason, as I have repeatedly said, to complain of these sudden attacks of fortune, as myself.— Be my intentions ever so pure, and well planned, some incidental obstruction frustrates the purposed end.— It is a long time since I troubled you with any complaints of this nature.— Bear therefore with this, as the occasion so pointedly excites it.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Sept. 5, 17—

THE incredible marks of friendship I had received during my residence in Scotland, claimed every acknowledgment on my part. To shew, therefore, that I was not insensible of this indulgence, I inserted the following advertisement in the public papers, every day, for the month I staid after my disengagement, in order to pay my respects to those who had particularly honoured me with their patronage.

" As Mrs. Bellamy has dissolved her engagement with the proprietors of the Theatre in the Cannongate, she begs leave to return her warmest thanks to the public in general, and to those friends in particular, who have done her the honour to patronize her in so flattering a degree, since her residence in Scotland; of which she will ever retain the most grateful sense, as their favours are deeply impressed in her heart.

" N. B. All persons who have any legal demand upon Mrs. Bellamy, are requested to deliver in their accounts at her house opposite Lord Milton's, in the Cannon-gate, within one month of this date, in order to receive the same."

The

The first among my patrons was the present first Baron, the worthy Mr. Montgomery; a gentleman as well known for his goodness as his great knowledge. He not only extricated me from the persecuting spirit of an insatiable creditor, as before related, but introduced me to the ladies of his family, who were the most amiable of women. One of these is the present Viscountess Townshend, whose goodness excels her beauty, though that is so acknowledged. In this circle I had the happiness of being introduced to the late Duchess of Douglas, who ever after honoured me with her patronage. These ladies gave me a general invitation, and not only received my visits with pleasure, but returned them.

We had besides formed a little party of particular friends, who met once or twice a week at my house. We termed this sociable meeting the "Nonsense Club." Miss Wordley was fixed upon for the goddess. And I really believe, as much innocent mirth, wit, and good humour abounded in it, as ever did in any assembly of the same nature. Every body was anxious to please. Ill-humour, ill-manners, and all indecency were banished from it, and instruction and mirth only reigned. The gentlemen that were admitted to our little society were chiefly students and young men possessed of learning and

and understanding greatly above the common rank.

The Dean of the Faculty had likewise been a volunteer in my cause upon the occasion before mentioned; and though the suit was pending two terms, the only expence I was at, was for printing the cases, which came but to a trifle. Upon a moderate computation, this suit would have cost hundreds in the English courts of common-law.

There was a circumstance attending this litigation, which I own greatly surprized me. The great advocate, Mr. Lockart, who was retained by my opponent, when it came before the court, bestowed the most virulent abuse upon me. Every thing that even the utmost malice of an enraged bad woman could have suggested, he loaded me with. But when he afterwards honoured me with a visit in my dressing-room, he told me he was much concerned at his having been misinformed. "However," continued he, "do not give yourself any uneasiness about what I said in the court. For what I uttered in the pleadings, except what immediately related to the case in point, was not paid the least attention to."

And indeed, a moment's reflection convinced me of the truth of the learned advocate's observation. For my being both before, and afterwards, caressed by ladies of

the most exemplary character, as well as of exalted rank, assured me, that whatever had been spoken to my disadvantage, upon the occasion, had not gained any credit. Had that been the case, I should not have retained their good opinion ; but, on the contrary, I was as much caressed in private, as admired in public. The very flattering reception I met with wherever I went, banished every apprehension ; and clearly evinced, that they were merely words of course.

But notwithstanding I was fortunate enough to escape the effects of this official scandal, how many are there whose future lives are rendered unhappy by it ! The indiscriminate and generally unmerited abuse with which such as are so unfortunate as to have any concerns in a court of justice, are bespattered by the counsel of their opponents, calls for reprehension. It affords but very little consolation to the unjustly abused person, to hear it afterwards said, " I am sorry " for it"—" I was misinformed"—" It will " not be regarded."—The bur of scandal sticks close—The impression is not easily defaced—It goes into the world ; tinctures every action ; and causes the whole of the future conduct to be viewed with a suspicious eye.—That gentlemen of enlarged minds, as those belonging to the bar are known to be, (a few excepted) should condescend to have recourse to so mean and unjust a method

thod for promoting the cause they are retained in, is really to be wondered at. Those who are naturally revengeful and abusive, may rejoice at having an opportunity of indulging a propensity which gives them pleasure; but an humane and generous person, will certainly refrain from every *unnecessary* exertion of it.—I think I have made some similar observations in a former letter. These however, shall go, as the custom I am censoring, though it has hitherto been considered as perfectly allowable, is much complained of, and cries aloud for redress.—Let me just add, that though the circumstances before-mentioned has given rise to this digression, a general reproof is only intended.

In consequence of not being able to discharge the whole of the debts I had contracted here, I applied to Mr. Hearne, the gentleman I have already mentioned, who immediately sent me two hundred pounds. But that sum not being adequate to the demands made upon me, which were more considerable than I apprehended, I wrote to Sir George Metham to request his assistance. By the return of the post, I received a remittance for the sum I required, together with a very pressing invitation to spend some days with him, upon my return to London, at his seat at North Cave, my son being there for the holidays.

Accordingly, at the expiration of the month, Miss Wordley and myself set off for Haddington; to which place some of our Edinburgh friends accompanied us, and spent the evening. The next morning we continued our journey; and as we had leisure, I was determined to take a view, as we went on, of every place that excited curiosity. This intention, however, was prevented by a disagreeable event which happened early on our journey, and makes me shudder whilst I relate it.

As we were passing through a village, not far from Berwick, an infant had crept into the high-road, and set itself down in the middle of it. The driver of the chaise going on Jehu-like, did not perceive it; and Miss Wordley and myself being employ in reading, neither did we observe it till the chaise had gone over its legs. Providentially, my screams prevented the carriage from going over its head. The accident had so violent an effect upon me, that I was taken out senseless, and it was some time before I could be restored to life.

As soon as I recovered, my first thoughts were bestowed upon the maimed little one, of whose disaster we had unfortunately, but innocently, been the occasion. Its parents being now returned from their rural work in the fields, I ordered every possible care to be taken of it; and I am certain I suffered
more

more pain of mind, than the child did of body. Had there been a surgeon near, I should not have pursued my journey; but I could not think of letting the poor baby lie neglected through my acute feelings. I therefore, though very unfit to travel, hastened on to the next town, where I was recommended to a gentleman of eminence in his profession, whom I immediately dispatched to his relief. Before he went, I requested him to write to me, as soon as possible, at Sir George Metham's; as I was not only anxious for the recovery of the child, but because the expence of his attendance could not then be ascertained.

A few weeks after my arrival at Cave, I had the pleasure of hearing, not only from the surgeon himself, but from a person who resided in the village, that through the skill of the former, and another trifling circumstance, the child was perfectly recovered. The parents were likewise made happy, and the surgeon amply rewarded by Sir George; who had a tear for pity, and a hand ever ready to relieve the distressed, while he had the power.

This was one of those eventual circumstances, which appears at first to be a great misfortune, but in the end is productive of the greatest good. For I have since been informed that the father of the child, a poor industrious peasant with a large family, was upon

the point of being turned out of his little habitation, and having his goods seized, by an unfeeling landlord, at the time the accident happened. But this was prevented by Sir George's timely bounty; who not only rescued him from his present distress, but enabled him and his family to live in comfort ever after.

Oh how I envied Sir George his feelings upon this occasion! For the exquisite sensation such a benevolent act must excite in a susceptible mind is truly enviable.—Though envy is a vice, with which, thank Heaven, I am totally unacquainted, yet I never hear of the performance of a generous action, but a wish instantly arises in my breast, that I had been the happy person who possessed the power with the inclination to perform it.—Whether this desire of robbing another of so great a happiness, falls under the denomination of envy, I leave to the casuists to determine; but it is a desire I cannot suppress.—To light up the face of distress into gladness, and to pour the balm of comfort into the wounded mind, is the truest felicity the human heart is capable of feeling.

I was so much indisposed when I got to Alnwick, for the agitation I had undergone, that I was obliged to remain there some days, before I was able to view that beautiful Gothic Castle, which I did not care to leave the place without doing. I have,

have, however, at present, very little recollection of it. Sir George had wrote me word, that he would send his chaise to meet me at York, and convey me from thence to his house; but unluckily his servant had gone to a favourite house of his, and not to the Post-House, where we were set down; and the people of the inn at which the man had set up his horses, were so very illiberal as to deny his being there, when I sent to enquire.

The morning after my arrival at York, I went to pay my devoirs at the convent, where I had spent so many happy hours, during my former residence in that city. I found but few of those alive with whom I had then been acquainted, and learnt that the good old chaplain had for some time been gone to enjoy the reward of his piety. As I purposed proceeding to Cave that afternoon, I was obliged to decline a very pressing invitation, the pious inhabitants of this blessed abode gave me to spend some time with them, and took my leave, loaded with benevolent wishes.

Upon my return to the inn, I was not very well pleased at still hearing no news of Sir George's carriage, my finances not being in the most flourishing state. I therefore was necessitated to make use of a hired one, in which we set off. When we arrived at a place about twenty miles from York, I left

my companion at the inn, and proceeded to Sir George's alone. I wished to reconnoitre, and be certain of a kind reception, before I introduced her. If my reception should not be as warm as my invitation, or if there happened to be any company I did not like to join, I was determined to return from his honour's the same evening. But I beg Sir George's pardon for even the bare supposition. Had I considered rightly, I could have had no cause for apprehension on either point, particularly the latter, as he had always been remarkably careful in the choice of the company he introduced me to.

When I approached the house, I saw the owner of it at a distance; and as the road I was in, led to his mansion only, he was assured the visit must be to him; he therefore hastened to the chaise. I was much surprised at seeing him alone; nor did he seem to be less so at my being without a companion. As soon as I came up to him, he cried out,

“ My dear Pop! how comes it that you are
“ by yourself and in a hack? My chaise has
“ been waiting for you several days at York.
“ I began to be alarmed at your stay, and
“ sent George, and my nephew, and some
“ others, yesterday, to make enquiries about
“ you. But where is Miss Wordley? I hoped
“ to have had the pleasure of her company.”
From so cordial a reception, I no longer harboured a doubt of my presence giving pleasure

sure at Cave. I then informed Sir George, that I had left Miss Wordley at a village some miles from his house; upon which he dispatched the chaise to bring her.

As I entered the hospitable mansion, I had the pleasure of seeing the faithful valet I have formerly had occasion to mention. The worthy fellow absolutely shed tears of joy upon my hand as he kissed it. He had conceived such an affection for my son, that I looked upon him more like a relation than a servant. He had lived with his master from his childhood; having been brought up in a school, erected by Mr. Montgomery, Sir George's father, for the education of the children of such of his tenants and neighbours, as could not afford to bestow one on them. At this period, most of Sir George's servants, both men and women, had partaken of the old gentleman's goodness. I am sorry to be able to add, that I heard with infinite concern some years after, that Sir George had discharged his faithful Sherrad, through the misrepresentations of a favourite mistress..

We had not been long seated, when we beheld Miss Wordley approach, attended by the cavalcade which had been dispatched in quest of me. The Goddess of Nonsense forgetting it was Sunday, had placed herself in the window, and sat very composedly *at work*. So unusual a sight drew the attention of those who passed, and soon raised a crowd before

the inn. My son and his companions happening to ride through the village, at the same time, in their return, their notice was likewise attracted by the novelty. This gave Miss Wordley an opportunity of seeing my younger, whom she immediately knew by the great resemblance he bore to his father. Upon which, being above all ceremony, and her apprehensions of a favourable reception being removed by the sight of the chaise, she threw up the window, made herself known to the young gentlemen, and being seated in the chaise, was conducted by four squires on horseback, *en grand train*, to join us.

After tea, my host desired he might have the pleasure of shewing me to my apartment, as he had something particular to say to me. I arose, and followed him. When we got into my room, I was not a little surprized to see him assume an air of consequence, which no one knew better than himself how to do. He then, with a grave countenance, said, that he was very much concerned to tell me, he had something very disagreeable to inform me of. I began to fear, from this exordium, that I had been too hasty in sending away the chaise. But my apprehensions soon vanished, when he told me, with great solemnity, that during the distraction occasioned by our separation, he had rashly bound himself, by the most sacred vows, never more

more to have any tender connection with me.

The conclusion of this speech had such an effect upon me, that I was in danger of forgetting the graces, so far as to burst into a fit of laughter. But recollecting myself as well as I could, I begged he would not be under the confusion of an apology; for could I have supposed, that in the present situation of things it would have been otherwise, I certainly should not have accepted his invitation. I perceived that his vanity was much hurt at this declaration, and was concerned at it. He had not supposed that I should receive a circumstance of such great import with the unaffected indifference I did. He expected that I should regret the restriction, with the same poignant feelings he had declared he himself felt; and his chagrin upon the occasion was visible. However, upon rejoining the company, he re-assumed his good humour and politeness. In both of these Sir George exceeded the generality of his sex, particularly in the latter. I cannot recollect a person amongst all my acquaintance, except the Dowager Lady Harrington, who knew how to acquit themselves in doing the honours of their house, with more ease and attention. An indisputable proof of a good heart, improved by a polite education.

G. A. B.

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L E T

LETTER LXXX.

September 12, 17—

WHILST I continued at Cave, every body seemed to vie with each other which could most succeed in pleasing me. But my anxiety to procure an engagement at the theatre, made me at times very uneasy. Such a step was absolutely necessary, to clear me from the debts with which I was encumbered; for notwithstanding the sums I had paid, I still owed above four thousand pounds. Sir George expressed to me a desire of selling an estate, in order to extricate both himself and me, which he assured me he would do, as soon as it was in his power; and he gave me a commission to speak to Alderman Cracroft, upon my return to London, to look out for a purchaser.

In the mean time, he wrote to his cousin, Lord Eglington, desiring he would use his interest with Mr. Beard, the then acting manager, in order to replace me in my former station at Covent-Garden theatre. By his lordship's answer, I had the mortification to find, that the proprietors were desirous of saving so heavy a salary as mine. Mrs. Ward and Miss Macklin, had divided between them the characters which used to be in my possession. His lordship was therefore informed,

that

that there was no room for me. My pride, as well as the prudential motives which made me solicitous for an engagement, tended to aggravate the contents of his lordship's letter, and to render the disappointment the more irksome. So that notwithstanding the unremitting attention which was shewn me at Cave; as the winter was now advanced, I determined to visit London.

Accordingly, Miss Wordley, my son, and little self, set off for the great city ; after having spent three months in all the pleasure that agreeable society, good cheer, good humour, and unembittered pleasantry can afford. I left this seat of hospitality with regret ; which would have been greatly augmented, could I have then foreseen that I should never more have been an inhabitant of it.

I could not refrain from shedding tears, as we passed the residence of my late worthy friend, Lord Downe. And when I recollect the manner of this nobleman's death, and that no public honours have been ever paid to his memory, a gloom overcasts my mind, and I pay him the tribute of a sigh.

At Stamford, I was most agreeably surprised to meet with Lord Granby, who did me the honour to spend the evening with me. I could not help observing, to my great surprise, that during the whole time we were together, his lordship never mentioned the

name

name of Mr. Calcraft. This was the more singular, from a report which was then current, and which I shall explain more fully in my annexed letter to that gentleman.

Sir George had promised to allow me seven guineas a week ; and he assured me that he would soon be in town. The commission he empowered me to give to Mr. Alderman Cracroft, afforded me double pleasure ; as, independent of my own expectations from it, I should be enabled by it to shew my gratitude to one of the best of men. I own the satisfaction I received, from finding myself thus reconciled to the person on whom I first bestowed my heart, was very great. A series of the most complicated treachery had induced me to use him ill, at the very time I preferred him to his whole sex ; and the assurance of his future friendship was flattering in the extreme. Whilst it promised to be serviceable to me, it did me honour.—The lines I have already quoted from Shakspere's " Midsummer Night's Dream," relative to the croffes of love, are full as applicable to this disunion, as to that where I applied them. I might here, also, with as much propriety say, " the course of true love never did run smooth."

Upon our arrival in London, we were set down at my mother's in Brewer-street, whose house, very fortunately, happened to be empty. I have already observed, that she usually

usually let it to persons of distinction; the profits of which, added to the interest of the money she had saved, together with her pension, enabled her to live genteelly, and keep up an acquaintance with those who were greatly her superiors.

She consented to let me have her first floor, and undertook to pay all my incidental expences with the money Sir George Metham had promised to allow me. But as she knew the capriciousness of his disposition, (which indeed turned out as she expected) and the precariousness of making an engagement at the theatres, when both the companies were settled, she objected to Miss Wordley's continuing with me. Though this objection was the result of prudence, it gave me infinite pain. However, as taking up my abode in a parent's house, must appear more eligible in the eyes of the world, than in any other lodging I could get, I was obliged to consent, though with great reluctance, to that young lady's settling near me.

Soon after my return from Scotland, Mr. Dodfley sent me a receipt for a considerable sum which I stood indebted to him for books. I accepted it as a genteel compliment, for having been the successful heroine of his brother's tragedy of "Cleone."

I now wrote to Mr. Digges, (I should say, Mr. West) to acquaint him that we must never meet again. As I had nothing to reproach

proach him with, I did not trouble him with any upbraiding. He had not been guilty of any deception towards me; and, barring his unhappy jealous temper, I must acknowledge that he strove, by every tender, indulgent attention, to please me. Nor did we ever meet after, but once in the street, and twice at the theatre.

A circumstance happened the night of our arrival in town, which, though trifling in itself, as it shewed my much-loved son's affection, I cannot forbear relating. When lights were brought, observing they were of tallow, without seeming to take any manner of notice, he immediately went out and purchased wax. Having done this, his delicacy induced him to call me, upon some slight pretence, into another room, whilst they were changed. Such a mark of attention and respect, could not fail of giving the most heart-felt pleasure to a fond mother. And I have the satisfaction to pay this just tribute to his loved memory, (for he is now no more) that to the day of his death, he preserved the same unremitting affection and assiduity to please me. The next day, I took him to Eton, as he had greatly trespassed upon the limits of his holidays.

Upon my return, I visited Mark-lane, to consult my good friend the Alderman; when I opened my commission, which he gladly undertook. I had always, even in my most encum-

encumbered situation, preserved my credit with him. Being himself the most punctual of men in all his dealings, he never excused the want of punctuality in others. He, however, usually gave his clients permission to name their own time of payment; but that he expected them to abide by. The alderman had paid my creditors such considerable sums the year of my unfortunate expatriating, that he not only kept them in good humour, but prevailed upon them all (except the one who had so cruelly persecuted me) to promise that they would do every thing in their power to serve me.

I had entered the room upon my first going in, with my usual chearfulness; and announced myself by saying, "Here I am." Mrs. Cracrost received me with her usual affection. Mr. Cracrost then asked me if I had any hopes of any engagement? To which I replied in the negative. But I told him what Sir George had promised to do for me; at which he was much pleased. And as the estate, intended to be sold, was in a registered county, he had no doubt, he said, but he should be able to dispose of it to advantage. I next acquainted him, that I should endeavour to procure an engagement, if it was only for a few nights, in order to be entitled to a benefit, which I had every reason to hope would prove as lucrative as usual. I therefore requested that he

he would get my letter of licence renewed; and likewise raise money upon the plate which I had left in his hands, at once to pay himself what would be due to him in a few days, (for he was to be paid his debt at stated periods) and to support me till Sir George came to town; as I could not hope to receive any supply from that gentleman, till the estate was sold.

During my return home, a thought struck me, which was to write to the honourable Mr. James Brudenell, now Lord Brudenell, who had formerly honoured me with his friendship, but since my separation from his intimate acquaintance, Sir George Metham, had desisted from noticing me. As I was in hopes that his ~~coyness~~ would subside, now the cause of it was removed, by my reconciliation with the man he so greatly esteemed, I presumed by letter to solicit the honour of his interest with the proprietors of the theatre. Should I be so happy as to succeed in obtaining this request, I could not then, I knew, entertain the least doubt of an engagement; it being the *distinguished* mark of character in that truly noble family, whenever they espouse a cause, to make use of every means in their power to promote it. Would some of high rank that I could name, follow such bright examples, we should not so frequently hear of broken promises.

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od

The observance of a promise is held by me in so sacred a light, that I cannot forbear expatiating upon it whenever opportunity offers. I shall, therefore, just remark, by way of addition to what I have said upon the subject in a former letter, that my feelings, when I have been obliged to postpone the performance of a verbal engagement, through the want of ability to accomplish my wishes, are pungent in the extreme.—I am even of opinion, that an injury received, will by no means cancel an obligation of this nature, or warrant a breach of it.—And so far is my attention engaged by anxiety for the fulfilment of those I have entered into, that there is *one* in particular, which will be a constant source of disquietude to me till it is in my power to discharge it.

The morning after, I was honoured with a visit from the gentleman I had wrote to; when he not only promised to exert his interest in my favour, but made me happy, by assuring me of the renewed patronage of the ladies of his family.

Two mornings after this, I happened to lie in bed longer than usual. Although I can rise at any hour, with the greatest alertness, when any concern, whether of business or pleasure calls me; yet when that is not the case, you know I am no *Matineſſ*. Being thus indolently inclined, Miss Wordley came running into my bed-chamber, and with

with joy impressed on her countenance, desired I would make haste and rise, as Johnny Beard was coming to see me.

I imagined Miss Wordley meant Mr. Baird from Glasgow; a gentleman who had been a warm partisan of mine, whilst I was in that city. I could not entertain the most distant idea, that the manager of Covent-Garden theatre would so far lessen his consequence, as to visit a performer whom he had so recently rejected; alledging, as he had done to Lord Eglington, that musical pieces were the staple commodity of that house. I found it, however, to my great surprise, to be the patentee himself. Having saluted me, with his usual cordial civility, he informed me, laughing, that he was come ambassador from the junto, and had the happiness to be deputed by them to engage me; adding, that there was a necessity for the engagement's being signed that evening.

Upon my expressing my astonishment at the celerity required, and the urgency made use of, he acquainted me, that he had been honoured with a visit from Colonel Brudenell, who had peremptorily *demanded* that I should be engaged in four and twenty hours, or else he should be obliged to *compel* them to a compliance. As the resolution of this gentleman was well known; and, likewise, that he was distinguished by having the ear of royalty; the proprietors thought it better to comply

comply with his demand, than to risque incurring the displeasure of a person whose favour was of such importance to them.

As a further consideration, they knew he had great influence over all the young men of quality, many of whom would be happy in having an opportunity of breaking chandeliers, and pulling up benches.

It must be supposed that I was not a little mortified, when I considered that a performer, who had always been esteemed of consequence, and who had every reason to conclude herself in some estimation with the public, should, according to the stage phrase, be forced upon the managers. I was, however, consoled by the reflection, that I was still honoured with the friendship of my worthy benefactor Mr. Brudenell, who had induced his brother the Colonel, to espouse my cause so warmly.

I immediately sent my good friend, Alderman Cracroft, intelligence of this unexpected success. He was much pleased to hear of it; but acquainted me at the same time, of his having been informed, that my inexorable prosecutrix had bought up two notes of mine, in order to make her debt above a thousand pounds; by which she intended to prevent me from taking the benefit of any act of insolvency. And this she had done, notwithstanding I had regularly paid her the stipulated two hundred pounds a year,

a year, and had given a proof of my honest intentions, by scorning even a thought of taking advantage of an act, at the time I owed near twice the sum I now did. He therefore advised me by all means to apply to Comte Hasflang, with whom I had formerly had the honour to be upon the most friendly terms, to request that he would retain me for his house-keeper, as a security for my person.

The application was no sooner made, than granted, and my protection was drawn up nearly in these words :

“ WHEREAS George Anne Bellamy, my
“ house-keeper, informs me, that she has
“ contracted some debts which she is anxious
“ to pay; and as she is offered an engage-
“ ment at Covent-Garden theatre, I grant
“ her my leave to perform at the said theatre,
“ upon this condition *only*, that she appro-
“ priates her *whole salary* for the use of her
“ creditors.

“ Signed,
“ De Hasflang.”

The next day, my engagement at Covent-Garden theatre was publicly announced in the papers, together with my intended appearance, the Friday following, in the character of Cleone.

I had now obtained the summit of my present hopes; and as I know your feeling are set in unison with my own, I dare

say

say you will enjoy with me this momentary respite of mine from trouble.—A *momentary* respite I call it—For as Eloisa says, upon reading Abelard's Letters,

“ Whene'er thy name I find,

“ Some sure misfortune follows close behind ;”

So, with me, fresh troubles tread upon the heels of a relaxation from pain; as the hurricanes in the West Indies, and other countries subject to them, are surely preceded by a dead calm.

G. A. B.

L E T T E R LXXXI.

Sept. 20, 17—

I Now imagined my person to be secure, and that all my affairs were settled, except that of my obdurate female creditor; and even her I had now no apprehensions from, as I concluded she would take the yearly sum she had agreed to do, rather than attempt breaking through the laws of nations by attacking a person, who was actually the known domestic of a foreign minister; and as I was certain that I should be able to pay her the stipulated sum, from the produce of my benefit, as it was not due till the April following, I set my heart at rest upon that score. I was likewise perfectly happy, that notwithstanding my sudden decampment in the middle of the season,

son, I had nothing to apprehend from the loss of the public favour; as the very morning the play I was to appear in was advertised, every place in the house was taken.

But to my very great mortification, I found the tranquillity which I had assumed to be fallacious; and the serene prospect that seemed to present itself, as unsubstantial as the baseless fabric of a dream. The house-keeper who lived with me during my abode in Jermyn-street, and in whom I had wholly confided, had appropriated the money allowed for the expences of the house to her own use; and by bringing me in false vouchers, made me believe every thing was paid for; by which means, I found myself two hundred pounds more in debt than I thought for. With the money thus fraudulently obtained, she had purchased herself a husband, whom she accompanied to Switzerland, his native country.

This occasioned me many unwelcome visitors, and obliged me to be troublesome once more, to my good friend Mr. Hearne, who lent me the money, and I discharged all their bills. I now concluded I was exonerated from all claims that could be made upon me, but I was still deceived. Upon the renewal of my letter of licence, I had sent it to Mr. Deard, to whom I owed about seventeen pounds, for him to sign. I did this as a mere matter of form; for as I had expended

pended large sums with his father as well as himself, I had no apprehensions about such a trifle.

But instead of signing it, Mr. Deard sent me word he would call upon me. This he did, on the morning of the day I was once more to exhibit myself to the public. He was informed that I was engaged, and could not see him. But as he was very pressing, and had formerly been very obliging in lending me diamonds, I naturally imagined his business was something of the same purport. No words, however, can express my fright and astonishment, when he informed me, that he had a demand upon me for one hundred and odd pounds, for a pair of ear-rings he had lent me, and which he told me had been pledged at Mr. Watson's, in Princes-street, Leicester-fields.

Had the snakey head of Medusa been presented to my view, I could not have been more petrified than I was at receiving this information. The pair of ear-rings had been lent me before I left London; and when I had no longer any occasion for them, I returned them by a person I thought I could entrust; but I now found she had been dishonest enough to pawn them. Mr. Deard told me, that he was sensible I knew nothing of the affair; but that did not exonerate me from being accountable for them. Had I

returned them myself; as I certainly ought to have done, it would have prevented this disagreeable transaction.

What made this circumstance the more singular was, that I had sent the letter of licence, when it was first drawn, to Mr. Deard, and he had signed it for the sum before mentioned. The unhappy wretch who committed this breach of trust, was in possession of a fortune at the time she did it, and had paid the debt of nature only a few months before I was made acquainted with her dishonesty. She had before borrowed a watch of mine, set with diamonds, which she had also pledged; but in compassion to her youth and family, I did not proceed to extremities.

There was no resource now left, but to pay the money. For this purpose I sent once more to Mr. Hearne. That worthy man came immediately, and settled the affair; but not without reproaching Mr. Deard, in the severest terms, for deferring to inform me of this untoward transaction till the day appointed for my appearance, which he well knew must be a very improper time to discompose my mind. He told him, as my being in Scotland was no secret, he ought to have wrote to me there, that I might have had the earliest information possible of an affair which so nearly concerned me. As Mr. Hearne had formerly paid his father and him large

large sums of money upon my account, this reprobation came with double efficacy from his lips.

Mr. Deard apologized for the omission, by alledging, that as he knew me to be quite innocent of the affair, he feared the knowledge of it would have affected me too much at such a distance; and as he knew my principle, he had not entertained the least doubt of receiving the money upon my return to town. This unlucky accident disconcerted me greatly; but I was really angry at an offer of more diamonds, which he had brought with him, to decorate me. After what had passed, I rejected them with some asperity; and I then formed a resolution of never borrowing any jewels in future, but of Lady Tyrawley, which I considered as my own; her Ladyship having frequently declared, that she had willed all those she possessed, to me, upon her demise.

The apprehensions naturally attendant on a first appearance, can be judged of only by a performer. And this is greatly heightened, where there is an anxiety to preserve reputation in a profession which has been very hardly acquired. The ill-judged visit of Mr. Deard, made no inconsiderable addition to the perturbations I experienced upon this occasion. They were, however, soon removed by the incessant plaudits I received from every part of the house. But en-

couraging as these were, they did not gratify my feelings so much, as the splendid appearance of most of my former patronesses. Among them I saw with pleasure, all the ladies belonging to the family of the gentleman that had procured my engagement.

The managers, encouraged by the reiterated marks of approbation which were bestowed upon me at the conclusion of the piece, very *injudiciously* gave it, out for the next evening. They did not consider that this was an opera night, and consequently so great a show of beauty was not to be expected to grace the boxes. Besides, the author being now dead, as well as most of his friends and supporters, and the distress being so very deep that few persons could stand the effects of it, the piece was not at this time held in so high estimation as it once was. It consequently did not succeed the second night, though played after in the course of the winter.

But I must observe, that the managers have it always in their power to depress a performer, even if possessed of much greater merit than ever I could boast; and I am well persuaded, that if the greatest actor that ever was, and, in my humble opinion, ever will be, had not had *the management of himself*, the choice of his characters, and the timing of the representations, he would not have retained the estimation he so justly deserved,

served, and carried with him to the grave. The truth of the foregoing assertion will be more fully proved, by his treatment of the two first female performers that ever trod the stage, the deservedly celebrated Cibber, and Clive.

Miss Elliot, a very beautiful young woman, and who had great talents, had got possession of all my parts in comedy, except Lady Townley. Juliet, and two or three others, were restored me by Miss Macklin; but I had not much employment at the theatre. This, however, did not give me so great concern as it would have done formerly; for my attendance at his Excellency Comte Haslang's, engrossed every day a considerable part of my time.

Mr. Beard informed me, one evening, that "Coriolanus" was commanded for the following Thursday. I immediately pointed out to him, the impracticability of my recovering such a part as Verturia in a day. He answered me very short, that I must positively play it, as I had been *expressly named*; and, consequently, it must be. So flattering a distinction could not fail of affording me the greatest pleasure, and exciting my utmost emulation. But the very anxiety which urged me to *excel*, made me the more imperfect; and I had the mortification to feel, that I never played so ill in my life. This failure was greatly exaggerated, by

being contrasted with the success I had usually met with in this character. It had always been esteemed one of those in which I most shone. Indeed, to speak the truth, I verily believe, that no performer, entitled to the least merit, could so completely have massacred a Roman matron, as I unfortunately did that night.

My second mortification was relative to Lady Townley. As I had always gained great reputation in that character, had it been *properly announced*, there was every reason to conclude that the audience would have been brilliant; but being only substituted in the place of an opera, upon the indisposition of a singing performer, it was consequently represented to a very indifferent house.

Mr. Woodward had at this period dissolved the partnership, which he had very injudiciously entered into with Barry. This gentleman, as I have already observed, had accumulated, by his uncommon talents, and his oeconomy, the sum of eleven thousand pounds. Upon his having some dispute with the great Roseius, who, it is well known, could bear no brother near the throne, he went to Ireland, as before related; where, after four years labour and vexation, he found himself stripped of every guinea he had been possessed of, besides being involved in the joint debts. He had therefore commenced

menced a suit in Chancery against his late partner, and returned to England.

The subsequent winter he engaged at Covent-Garden, where his success was attended with great advantage to the proprietors. This excellent actor, was known in the theatre to have formerly been my professed admirer. The attention he now seemed to pay me, was therefore immediately set down to the same account. Miss Elliot's ill health obliging her often to decline playing, all the characters I had once possessed now reverted to their owner: which occasioned Mr. Woodward and myself, to appear generally in the same pieces.

Unfortunately for me, a disagreement subsisted between him and the manager, although they had formerly lived in the strictest intimacy. Mr. Woodward's seeming partiality towards me, consequently involved me in Mr. Beard's displeasure. Another circumstance tended to augment this unmerited impression: The manager had lately married Mr. Rich's daughter, with whom, as I have informed you, I was some years back so intimate. This lady, however, having indiscreetly repeated some conversation which passed at Mr. Calcraft's table, he desired I would decline receiving her visits. A great coolness was the result, and we never after were upon friendly terms. I can account no other way for this alteration in the behav-

our of the manager, which had always been cordial till that event took place.

Sir George Metham at length came to town; and, soon after his arrival, he desired I would invite Mr. Alderman Cracrost and Mr. Forrest to dinner, in order to settle the preliminary steps towards the disposal of the estate he proposed to sell. He, upon this occasion, repeated the promise he had made me, when at Cave, of discharging all my debts, as soon as he received the purchase money. But ill fortune was still to pursue me. Mr. Cracrost was not able, among all his connections, to get any one to purchase the estate at the price set upon it. The hopes I had indulged, and with so good a prospect of their completion, were consequently frustrated; for a coolness soon after took place, which obliterated all these professions; and the money I expected, went to purchase an annuity for a lady he afterwards formed a connection with.

When my benefit came to be fixed, the manager and myself had some words relative to Miss Wordley's performing on the occasion. That young lady wished to try her fortune upon the London stage. I desired much to indulge her, as I was at this time so attached to her, that I feared she would be obliged to enter into some country company, or go to Ireland, if she could not get an engagement in town. The play performed on my night,
was

was “ Romeo and Juliet ;” and the after-piece was, “ Miss in her Teens ;” in which she was to make her *entrée* in Tag.

I succeeded in carrying my point as to the introduction of my friend, and the receipt was the greatest that had ever been known. My great gold tickets, however, failed ; for I received but one hundred from Lord Holderness ; fifty a-piece from General Monkton, Lord Granby, and Lord Pigot ; and one fifty in a blank cover, which I have often suspected came from Mr. Woodward.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXII.

September 30, 17—

TH E day after, Sir George Metham sent to inform me that my son was much indisposed, and requested me to come to Palace-yard. Having a visitant with me, that was just come from Scotland, I could not obey the summons till after dinner. I then went, with a promise of returning as soon as possible ; having been informed by the servant, who brought the message, that my dear George had only a slight cold.

When I arrived, I found Mr. Macklin *tête-à-tête* with Sir George ; who had informed the baronet that I was going to be married to Mr. Woodward. The absurdity of such a

report could only be laughed at, on its being mentioned to me; and answered with, "Yes, to be sure!" After the veteran was departed, Sir George pressed me much to stay the evening. I told him I could not possibly comply with his request, as I had left company at home, to whom I had promised, and good manners obliged me to return. Notwithstanding this, forgetting his usual politeness, he entreated me again to stay; and, in spite of all his usual non-chalance, I verily believe, had I been *d'accord*, he would not now have been a rigid observer of those *solemn oaths*, which had given him so much pain at Cave.

Upon my still persisting in going, he hinted at the report relative to Mr. Woodward, which, I own, displeased me much; for it could not really be supposed, that a person of that gentleman's age and prudence, especially as he had lost a fortune, and was endeavouring to save another, would marry a woman, even if she were inclinable, who was so much involved as myself, and was not the best oeconomist in the world. Whether Sir George affected to believe the report, in order to serve as a plea for his not fulfilling the repeated promises he had made me, or whether he was really jealous, I will not pretend to determine; but such a coolness immediately took place, that I never saw him from this time till within these last seven years,

years, when he called upon me to render me some assistance.

I have often regretted, that a man and woman cannot live in that unimpassioned friendship with each other, which subsists between two persons of the same sex, without being suspected by the world of a connection of a more tender nature, and acquiring censure thereby. I scarcely ever knew an instance, except in the intimacy between the amiable Jemmy Moor, whose untimely fate I have recorded, and myself, which lasted unchangeable, and *unreproached*, till death severed the band of friendship which united us.

I hope my sex will excuse the declaration, but I freely acknowledge, that I generally prefer the conversation of the men to that of females. The topics of the latter usually turn upon fashions or scandal, both of which I am now a stranger to. Scandal in particular I have always held in the highest detestation, and I have made it the subject of my reprehension in one of my preceding letters. Though I am now confined to a plain coif, I shall ever retain the same contempt for that hypocrisy, which this part of the female attire too often covers. On the contrary, I have every reason to admire sincerity; for, by walking hand in hand with that celestial visitor, it has procured for me

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the friendship of many persons of the best understanding, as well as the best hearts.

As I shall have occasion to mention Mr. Woodward frequently in my subsequent letters, I shall endeavour to draw a portrait of him in *private* life. His merit as an actor was so universally known, and justly admired, as to render all eulogiums on that head unnecessary. He was educated at Merchant-Taylor's-school, where he soon attracted the notice of the masters, by the rapid progress he made in his studies. I have often heard Sir George Hay, as well as Dr. Townley, the late Master, say, that he excited the surprize of every one, for he seemed to learn by intuition.

He early shewed an attachment to the stage; and his father meeting with misfortunes, he was induced to try the advantage of the talents with which nature had endowed him, in the theatrical line, in preference to the church, for which he was intended. As his figure was elegant, it procured him the admiration of some of the gay frail ones, which occasioned him to spend several years in dissipation. This was the more extraordinary, as he was naturally of a grave turn of mind. He was, indeed, so much so, that to those who were not intimate with him, it had the appearance of ill-natured austerity.

I have

I have already informed you, that he had a strong understanding, improved by cultivation. His knowledge was extensive, without any alloy of pedantry; but he never made an ostentatious display of it. He was a most entertaining companion when he approved of his company, but reserved in the extreme when he did not. He well knew the value of money; but few were more ready, when a proper occasion offered, to do a generous action. He was the most *principled* man I ever was acquainted with; and he gave me the following proof of his being so.

Mr. Lewis one day reproached him, at the theatre, with his appearing at rehearsal in a coat a little out at the elbows. This he imputed to pride, as he said he would not have done so but from a consciousness of his opulence. When Mr. Woodward repeated the circumstance to me, I enquired why he gave Mr. Lewis occasion for such a remark, by appearing in so worn a coat? To which he very seriously and significantly replied, "Madam, I cannot afford to run in debt." I cannot say but I felt very forcibly the justice of this reproach; and as persons are generally displeased when they feel themselves flung by a frank remembrancer, I was not in good humour, for some time, with my monitor.

Whilst

Whilst he was under age, he entered into an engagement to pay his father's debts; but notwithstanding he might have availed himself of that circumstance, he discharged the whole of them with great honour. He set his brother up in business twice; and was one of the best of sons to his mother, with whom he resided till his unfortunate Irish expedition.—I have thus given you the outlines of his character. To enumerate his virtues, and to place them in the conspicuous light they merit, lies not within the reach of my feeble pen.

Let me add, that I am of opinion his gravity, which was frequently misconstrued into pride, was occasioned by a bodily complaint he laboured under more than twenty years, and which was the cause of his death. I have been credibly informed, that had not a blameable delicacy prevented him from making Mr. Bromfield (a gentleman of whose chirurgical abilities he had the highest opinion) acquainted with his disorder, there would have been the greatest probability of his being restored to health, and he might have enjoyed an equal longevity with his contemporaries, Macklin and Yates.

I have been led on to introduce the death of this great actor, and upright man, long before I ought to have done it; but the subject of his life was so interesting to me, that I could

could not break off whilst any thing remained to be said of it. I hope it will not prove unacceptable to those who admired his theatrical talents, to find that his memory has likewise a claim to veneration upon account of his private virtues. I may, indeed, most truly say with Hamlet, "Take him for "all in all," combining all his claims to respect, "we shall not look upon his like "again."

As I know you participate in every circumstance that concerns me, I am persuaded you will read with pleasure this just, but inadequate tribute to the worthiest of men, who was at once, "my patron, "father, friend." Suspicious minds may perhaps annex another term to these; to such I shall only say, that had I been at that time inclined to enter into a tender connection, I had many solicitations from those who would have supported me in a very high line. People judge in general from appearances; and if those concerned do not think it worth while to explain these appearances, they always receive an unfavourable interpretation. Any further explanation of the nature of the union which afterwards took place between this gentleman and myself will be unnecessary, as it might be collected from many passages in the preceding part of this letter.

I am
Bliss

At

At the conclusion of the season, I had permission from his excellency Comte Haslang, to make a tour to the continent. His former housekeeper, who was now become Lady Paramount, had a house at Paddington, which induced his Lordship to prefer dining at the club; and, in the evening, to join his *intime*, Lord Falmouth, at Vauxhall, where the amusement of these two noblemen consisted in entertaining ladies of a particular denomination.

Nothing happened during this excursion worth relating. Upon my return, my mother's house being let to a family of the first quality, I took apartments in Rider-street, St. James's; and as I was now at liberty to have Miss Wordley with me, I requested her company. I have already, I think, informed you, that this young woman, before she was stage-struck, lived in the Earl of Powys's house, and was educated by her father, who was a profound scholar and divine, and endowed with a sound understanding.

As this daughter seemed to be the only one out of the three that had the happiness of enjoying the gifts of nature in a similar manner with himself, Mr. Wordley had taken uncommon pains to cultivate the seeds so visible in her infant mind; and the culture was not bestowed in vain. She joined to a brilliant wit, the greatest humanity and the best of hearts. This naturally endeared her

to

to me; and though by reason of her marriage, and her being the celebrated Quaker preacher, I am now deprived of her company, yet I am happy, when she calls upon me, to see that she retains her usual chearfulness; and I cannot help regretting those days of entertainment and innocent mirth, we have so often enjoyed together.

About this period an application was made to me by Mr. Woodifield, to pay a considerable sum for some red champaign, which, by Mr. Calcraft's desire, I had ordered from him to send to Lord Granby in Germany; and I had another demand from Finmore, of the Star and Garter tavern, for claret, which I had likewise indiscreetly wrote an order for Calcraft, when I resided in Parliament-street. As I could not think myself liable to these demands, I took no manner of notice of them; the consequence of which was, that they both commenced actions against me.

Accordingly, as I was preparing one night for the opera, I was honoured with a visit from two of the catchpole fraternity, who told me I must take the air with them, before I indulged my ears. The debt I had contracted of Woodifield, on Lord Granby's account, I could by no means litigate. His Lordship was abroad, and I was too much indebted to his generosity to think of writing to him upon such a subject.

When

When I arrived at the officer's house, the man seeing me better dressed than his visitors usually were, and recollecting my voice, he took my word for my settling Mr. Woodifield's action the next day; and giving bail for the other, which I was determined to contest, in order at once to expose Mr. Calcraft, and try the validity of my protection. For though I did not lodge in the Ambassador's house, I was actually his house-keeper, and remained upon the list till the Comte's death. But I only availed myself of his protection once. Whilst this affair was in agitation I sent for Mr. Willis, Mr. Calcraft's clerk, to whom I remonstrated upon this fresh instance of his master's ill treatment, but could obtain no redress. My letter to Mr. Calcraft will, however, elucidate these mean and ungentleman-like transactions.

I was obliged, by this unexpected event, to have recourse, once more, to the friendship of Mr. Hearne, who immediately assisted me. This last sum, accumulated that gentleman's debt to six hundred and forty pounds; for, besides the different sums I had borrowed of him, he had redeemed some valuables which I had left with Mr. Maclewain, of Dublin, in order to discharge every demand upon me when last I was in that kingdom.

Among these things was a gold enamelled snuff-box, a gift of the beautiful Countess of Kildare,

Kildare, (since Duchess of Leinster) and as such was esteemed invaluable by me. This, I own, was the only piece of elegance I ever severely regretted parting with ; nor should I ever have parted with it, had there not been almost a certainty of my having so valuable a mark of her Ladyship's partiality restored to me. This deposit, together with three or four dividends, and some tickets at my benefit, are all I have been able to pay off this large debt ; and inexpressibly happy shall I be, if ever it is in my power to discharge it. In the mean time, I shall retain the most lively gratitude for such frequent interpositions in my favour.

The being too sanguine in my hopes has led me into many difficulties ; but the indulgence of these expectations, originated from my having been so supremely fortunate as to meet with such singular friends as the Miss Merediths, Miss St. Leger, Miss Conway, Lady Tyrawley, and Mrs. Cracroft, as well as Mr. Woodward, whose former passion was now mellowed into friendship. I have, however, had the mortification to outlive them all.

Female friendship never becomes the subject of my pen, or of my conversation ; but that most beautiful description given of it by Shakspere, in his " Midsummer-Night's Dream *," immediately occurs to my me-

* Act III. Scene VII.

mory, and raises in my mind the most pleasing sensations.—As it is not inapplicable here, the mutual affection which subsisted between the foregoing ladies and myself, being of the purest and most exalted kind, I will transcribe for you the lines.

“ Is all the counsel that we two have shar’d,
“ The sister vows, the hours that we have spent,
“ When we have chid the hasty-footed time
“ For parting us: O ! and is all forgot ?
“ All school-days friendship, childhood innocence ?
“ We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
“ Created with our needles both one flower,
“ Both on one sampler, fitting on one cushion,
“ Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;
“ As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
“ Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
“ Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
“ But yet an union in partition ;
“ Two lovely berries moulded on one stem,
“ So with two seeming bodies, but one heart,
“ Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
“ Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.”

G. A. B.

L E T-

LETTER LXXXIII.

October 8, 17—

AT this period Mrs. Cracroft died, which gave me real pain, as we were for years in the strictest friendship. This excellent woman was greatly regretted by all who were acquainted with her eminent virtues. She possessed the most enchanting placidity of disposition, joined to the most liberal sentiments; and notwithstanding she was a miracle of chastity herself, she felt compassion for the frailties of her sex. Nor did she think herself contaminated by an intimacy with a much-injured woman, that she knew had been grossly imposed upon, and most wickedly traduced.

Permit me just to say, upon this occasion, (for, if I recollect aright, I have touched upon the subject in a former letter) I have always observed that the *really* virtuous of our sex, ever view with compassion the errors of those, who have been seduced by the artifices of designing men; and, though totally unacquainted themselves with the frailties of human nature, in this point, can be-
flew

stow a tear of pity on the martyr of an unguarded moment.—Chastity is undoubtedly the brightest ornament that adorns the female mind. I agree with Diana, when she says,

“ My chastity’s the jewel of our house,
“ Bequeathed down from many ancestors ;
“ Which were the greatest obloquy i’th’ world
“ In me to lose *.”

But I can by no means allow, as the censorious part of the sex seem to consider it, that this virtue is the *only* needful one ; and when a person has been unhappily deprived of it, though by the most seductive arts, every other good qualification takes its flight with it.

Lady Tyrawley’s health visibly declining, I became very apprehensive that her loss would soon succeed that of my much regretted friend just mentioned. Few evenings passed, without my receiving a summons to Somerset-house. Her Ladyship, however, remained in this situation for three or four years.

As soon as the theatre shut up, I again visited the continent. I had there the pleasure of hearing, that Madam Brilliant, the

* All’s well that ends well, A& IV. Scene II.

French actress I have frequently mentioned, had retired from the gay scene of life she had been so long engaged in, to the gloom of a convent. Though still esteemed in her theatrical profession, and with an extensive train of admirers, among whom was one of the first Dukes in that kingdom, she resisted all their solicitations; and notwithstanding she had been so unfortunate as to lose her reputation, she had the resolution to prefer fasting, and a breviary, to all the elegance and splendor of Paris. This, in my idea, is *real virtue*; especially as she had forfeited the opinion of the world. But she is amply repaid for every worldly loss, by that happy tranquillity she now, if she still be living, enjoys.

My going abroad this year was occasioned by the following circumstance. One of my creditors promised that he would sign my letter of licence, if I would pay him thirty guineas, and he gave me assurance in writing of his doing so; notwithstanding which, the very evening of the day I had paid the money on, he served me with a copy of a writ for the remainder. Exasperated at such ungenerous treatment, I gave bail, and determined to stand trial. Upon this occasion Mr. Woodward recommended Mr. Zachary Stephens, solicitor in Chancery-lane, to me, to carry on the suit. He undertook the cause, but through some neglect (as the officer

officer declared (either of his not being served with a proper notice, or his not serving one,) judgment was suffered to go against me, by what is termed default.

Distracted at the supposition of my bail's suffering upon my account, and apprehensive for my own liberty, I went, in order to accept the offered friendship of Mrs. Collier, who had settled in France, to avoid the persecution and extravagance of one of the worst of husbands. That lady immediately lent me the sum I required, and took my note payable in a year. At her house I renewed my former acquaintance with the beautiful Mrs. A—, who was sent abroad upon account of her having formed an imprudent partiality for a celebrated singer. I should not have mentioned this circumstance, but as it led to a very disagreeable one many years after.

Indeed, my life has been productive of so many untoward, and almost incredible events, that were there not many persons still living who can bear witness to the authenticity of them, I should be ashamed to relate them; as they must appear rather the memoirs of a *female Crusoe*, than a relation of facts. Such, however, should curiosity lead to enquiries, they will be found to be.

Upon my return to London, I was informed that Miss Wilford, a cousin of Mrs. Rich's, was to debute in *Esfifania*. This, added to
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the alteration in my circumstances, caused a great alteration in Mrs. Rich's deportment to me. "There was a time," as Shore says*, "when my approach would make a little holiday; and every face was dressed in smiles to see me." But as that lady's regards were only shewn to those who bask in sun-shine, and not to poor beings enveloped in a cloud of distress, I was no longer a favourite with her.

I could not, I acknowledge, claim a right to object to the lady's having a trial-part; but considering the terms I had formerly been upon with the family, I imagined I had at least a right to be consulted on the propriety of her appearance. At this time I had no acquaintance with any of them, except the late Mrs. Valquer, Mr. Rich's youngest daughter. This lady possessed many shining qualities. To unaffected manners, was added a goodness of heart which was visible in all her words and actions. I consequently did not chuse to give her pain, by making her acquainted with the alteration which had taken place in her step-dame's behaviour towards me.

About this time Mr. Kelly's "Thespis" was published. He therein attributes my not making the same eclat in my profession I had formerly done, to the embarrassed

* Jane Shore, Act V. Scene I.

state of my finances ; but to make amends for this disagreeable observation, he pays a compliment to my feelings. I did not, however, esteem myself in the least obliged ; as I never wish my left hand, upon such occasions, to know what my right hand does.

Just before the theatre opened, a very untoward circumstance happened to me, which gave the proprietors an opportunity, as they thought, of degrading me more in the eyes of the public than they had already endeavoured to do ; and they did not fail to take advantage of it, as the ensuing season was the last of my article. I had paid Mrs. Ray, for that was the name of my inexorable prosecutrix, for two years, the sum stipulated ; for which I only took receipts as it was paid, not knowing there was any necessity to see the four hundred pounds wrote off the obligation.

As this was the case, I was surprised to hear she had called very often at my lodgings. Comte Haslang being ill of the gout, my whole time was so taken up by my attendance upon him, that I was seldom at home till late ; by which means she was prevented from letting me know her business. She at last left a note, informing me, that if I would insure my life, she should be perfectly easy with regard to her debt. In order to get rid of so disagreeable a visitant, I sent her for answer, that if she would appoint a pro-

per person to transact the affair, I would comply with her request, as I would by no means see or speak with her.

The next day my valuable friend and patron the eldest Mr. Fox, who still flattered me with marks of his attention, had promised to dine with me. Besides his arrival, Mrs. Ray, accompanied by a man, came in a coach to the door. Though I could not imagine what could be her motive for requesting me to insure my life, as I was at that time in perfect health, yet I expected the person she should send with impatience. Accordingly I ordered the man to be admitted, but the lady was refused, as I had given positive orders she should never be suffered to enter my doors.

A man, who seemed to be an Italian Jew, now made his appearance. As soon as he was seated, not having any doubt of the nature of his business, I asked him what the insurance of my life, for the remaining four hundred pounds due to Mrs. Ray, would be? He appeared to be much surprised at my question. Upon which I repeated it. When he informed me, in broken English, that I was mistaken in his business. He said, the Tripoline Ambassador, to whom he was interpreter, having long admired me, and finding that I was indebted to the lady in question, he had offered to pay her the sum that was due to her, as well as my other de-

mands, could she introduce his Excellency to me. I now found that the proposal for the insurance of my life, was only made use of as introductory to this plan.

All the passions that ever entered into a female breast, immediately exerted their whole dominion over me. I was in an instant torn by rage, contempt, and offended pride. I know not which was most predominant; they each ruled by turns; and as I had never met with so gross an insult before, the contending passions deprived me of the power of utterance. I was almost choaked. As soon as I could a little recover myself, I pulled the bell; and the servant immediately answering it, I ordered him to shew the fellow down stairs. The pander, fearing from my manner, and the appearance of the footman, that if he did not directly comply, he would be in danger of being shewn the shortest way down, hastily rejoined his companion, and away they drove; and I soon after found, to my cost, that enraged at my not falling a prey to her machinations, Mrs. Ray went strait to her attorney, and entered up the judgment for the sum of nine hundred pounds, two of which consisted of debts that she had bought up to accumulate her own.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Oct. 15, 17—

AS soon as Mr. Fox, and some other guests, who had dined with me, were departed, I prepared to go to his Excellency's to cards; but as I passed through Jermyn-street, I was overtaken by the wretch's brother, who, almost breathless with running after me, informed me that a man, who came up at the same time, had an action against me, at his sister's suit. The shock had such an effect upon me, that I dropped down speechless in the street. Two such insults, so quickly succeeding each other, were not to be supported. Had the latter come singly, I could have borne it with Roman fortitude; but, united, they were too severe a trial.

Had I been able to preserve my reason upon this occasion, and been acquainted with the laws, I might have preserved my liberty, at least for that night; for it seems the fellows who arrested me, had, in their great hurry, forgot the warrant; without which, I find, the caption is not valid; but, during my imbecility, one of them ran for it. You see from this instance, at once, how necessary it is to preserve an equanimity of mind upon these trying occasions; and likewise how much it behoves persons who are so un-

fortunate as to be in debt, to make themselves acquainted with the powers of those who are employed in the execution of the laws by unfeeling and rigorous creditors. I have often lamented, that similar laws to those of Scotland are not in force here. There, such as are so unfortunate as to be confined for debt, upon delivering up their all, are liberated in a short time. By this means the prisons are empty, and the creditor receives at least a part of his debt; which, otherwise, would probably, as is too often the case, be dissipated during confinement. Lenity is productive of renewed industry; and to the honour of the Scots be it spoken, that people, as I had an opportunity of observing when among them, join the most scrupulous honesty to that good qualification.

I was taken, during this state of insensibility, to the officer's house in Stanhope-street, Clare-market; which happened to be the same, where my brother Captain O'Hara, as I have mentioned in a former letter, was confined. It was so long before I came to myself, that the surgeon, who was sent for to bleed me, was apprehensive for my life.—Happy would it have been, even at this period, if these apprehensions had been realized. For I might justly say with Matilda,
“ Had some good angel opened the Book
“ of Providence, and let me see my life, my
“ heart

" heart had burst when it beheld the woes,
" one by one, which I was to endure."

The mistress of the house had some feeling; and seeing me dressed above the common line, though plain, and having besides conceived some partiality for me, not only on account of my being an actress, but as sister to her favourite captain, who had so often been her lodger, she paid me more attention than persons generally meet with in such places. She sent for my maid, and kindly prevented all noise and confusion in the house, for five days, during which I remained in a state of silent insanity. My maid, to return the obligations she thought I lay under to all those who sent to enquire after me, took the servants that brought the messages, which were not a few, to the bar, and treated them with what they would have; and this made no inconsiderable addition to my expences.

The sixth morning of my residence in this place, the woman of the house came up to me, and told me that the writ was returnable the next day, and if I did not eat and drink, and get a *habeas corpus*, I should be carried a corpse to Newgate. The name of that dreadful place made me tremble; but, at the same time, it roused me as if I had been electrified. I immediately recovered from my stupidity, and asked her what was to be done? She informed me, that it would

be necessary for me to employ an attorney to procure a *habeas* for me, and also to send and engage a lodging within the rules of the King's-Bench. She added, that her son, who was an attorney, was below, and would be glad to serve me. She concluded with telling me, that persons in the law never advanced any money for their clients; though indeed they did not expect to have their bills settled immediately, especially where it was safe, as it must be with a lady who had credit enough to *owe* one person twelve hundred pounds. I startled at the mention of so large a sum, and desired her to explain herself; which she did by telling me, that was the debt for which the execution was levied against me.

What was now to be done I scarcely knew. I had but a few guineas about me. The Comte was too much indisposed to inform him of my situation; and as my maid, upon her first being made acquainted with it, had sent word to his excellency that I had had a fall, which prevented me from attending his lordship, I knew not how to contradict her message. Mr. Woodward, as well as every other person I could hope for assistance from, were out of town. I was informed that the *habeas* would not be more than five or six pounds; but that the expence of the rules would be considerable, exclusive of my finding proper sureties.

I now

I now began to consider who I could send to upon this emergency. I had known Mrs. Stacie, when her husband kept an inn at Stilton. They had since removed to the Bedford Arms in Covent-Garden. Having conceived a very strong attachment for her, from frequently calling at their house at Stilton, I had promised to stand sponsor to the child she was pregnant with, upon my return from the north. I had not only performed this promise, but had been called upon to appear upon the same occasion to two others.

Upon the strength of this acquaintance, I immediately applied to her for twelve guineas. I thought that sum, with that I had, would be sufficient to pay the whole of my expences here; but, to my inconceivable surprise, they amounted to as much again; so that I paid very handsomely for the civility the mistress of the house had shewn me, in keeping it quiet.

Mrs. Stacie came immediately on my sending to her, and could not refrain from tears, at seeing me in such an unexpected situation. Her husband had given her a bill for twenty pounds, which she let me have; and upon hearing that I had obstinately refused all food, when she returned, she sent me a supper of all the niceties their house afforded.

At the time this affair happened, my mother was upon a visit in Oxfordshire, and Miss Wordley was at Richmond, where she was engaged in the theatrical line. But the latter, upon being wrote to by my servant, flew up to town, and brought me all the money she could muster or borrow; which was very necessary towards settling my bill.

In return for the civility the mistress of the house had shewn me, I asked her to partake of the supper Mrs. Stacie sent me. She cheerfully accepted my invitation. During our meal, she enumerated all the persons of quality who had occasionally been her visitors. Among others of her guests, she informed me that the wretched Ayliffe had been one, and continued there till he was removed to Newgate.

After supper, she asked if she should entertain me with a song; for she was reckoned, she said, to have a very fine voice. The oddity of her manner, as she made the proposal, joined to her masculine figure, had such an effect upon my imagination, that I instantly burst into a violent fit of laughter. Miss Wordley, who was always anxious about me to an extreme, was apprehensive that I had fallen into hystericks; and the mistress of the house, concluding they would be attended with the same faintings I had experienced since I had been her unfortunate lodger,

lodger, was also much alarmed ; but upon my assuring her that I had now summoned up all my resolution, she favoured me with a specimen of her talents, to our entire satisfaction. The approbation we expressed gave her such sensible pleasure, that she concluded with telling me, she was sure, as I was fond of music, I *must* be pleased with her voice.

That evening I received a letter from Mr. Woodward, who was just come to town, wherein he requested that I would permit him to visit me. In my answer, I begged that he would not attempt it ; but I told him, that I should be obliged to him if he would send some person to get me a lodging in the Rules, and be one of my sureties, Mr. Stacie having offered to be the other. To this he readily consented. I now resolved to keep up my spirits, though I was informed I must go into the prison, notwithstanding I had it in my power to obtain the Rules.

The next morning Mr. Thomas, then Lord Mansfield's clerk, came himself with the tip-staff, to conduct me over to the warden. Mr. Marsden very politely met me at the door of his house, and conducted me into the parlour. My attorney having attended Mr. Woodward and Mr. Stacie there in the morning, to settle for the Rules, the Marshal knew of my coming, and I found every thing usual for breakfast prepared against I arrived.

This grand point being settled, I went to a little vile lodging, which had been taken for me, at the house belonging to the Wind-mill in St. George's Fields; a spot rendered famous by Shakspere, from being noticed by Justice Shallow, in the "Second Part of Henry the Fourth *." For this wretched place I was to pay two guineas a week; but the time to procure me a lodging had been so short, that the first which offered was fixed upon.

Mr. Marlden attended me himself, with great complaisance, to my new apartments; and I was not a little surprised, upon our being seated, at his taking out a large purse of gold, and presenting it to me, with a request, that I would make use of it for my present exigencies, and return it to him when convenient. As an inducement for my doing this, he observed, that my expences must have been very great at the officer's house; for though the woman was remarkably civil, she generally made her guests pay for that civility. I told him, that my residence at the officer's house had indeed been expensive, and related to him what had occasioned it; but I begged to decline his offer, assuring him that I was not at present in need of his kind assistance. Upon which he took his leave; entreating me, as he went

* Act III. Scene V.

out, to let him know if I should at any time happen to be short of cash.

When Mr. Marsden was gone, I could not help expressing my surprise to Miss Wordley, who had accompanied me in this *confined* tour, at his generous politeness. My companion instantly replied, "I am amazed at "your simplicity! You may be assured it "comes originally from Mr. Woodward! "As you have so often rejected his pecu- "niary assistance, I plainly see he has taken "this method to serve you, without being "mortified by a refusal."

In the evening that gentleman came to pay me a visit; when he advised me to write, as soon as possible, to the Attorney-General, my much honoured friend Mr. Yorke, to consult him upon my case. By Mr. Woodward not making me an offer of his assistance, at this time, I was convinced that Miss Wordley's supposition was well founded. Indeed, her sagacity and superior understanding, enabled her to see every event clearer, in all points of view, than most people.

The next day I desired her to take a letter to Mr. Yorke. My honourable (and now, alas! my much regretted) friend, immediately wrote me an answer, wherein he informed me, in the kindest terms, that he would pay every attention to the affair, and would do all in his power to extricate me from it. But as nothing could be done till November,

November, he requested me to accept the inclosed bills, in lieu of what his loved sister, Lady Anson, had intended to bequeath me, had she not been taken away suddenly. He then advised me, if my creditor could not be prevailed on to compromise the debt, to stand trial; when he was well assured, he said, a verdict would be given in my favour; but as his excellency, Comte Haflang, was advanced in years, it might continue pending over my head for some time.

—In how pleasing a manner was this favour conferred! the delicacy and politeness with which it was accompanied, gave it double value, and claimed my warmest acknowledgments.

Finding I must make up my mind to my present situation, as nothing could be done for so long a time, I sent Miss Wordley to seek out another apartment; for though, by Mr. Yorke's bounty, I found myself possessed of two hundred pounds, yet it was visible that the noble donor had sent me that sum, on purpose to enable me to compromise the debt with Mrs. Ray, should she consent to it. Miss Wordley accordingly fixed on two rooms adjoining to the Dog and Duck, at twelve shillings a week; which were more eligible, better furnished, and much airier, than those I was now in. There was, indeed, no convenient accommodation for my friend,

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I doob ed blues garden to w8

but she agreed to put up with the best we could make, those nights on which her engagement at Richmond would permit her to be with me.

I was in hopes, I should have been able to compress the whole of the tedious detail of this disagreeable affair into one letter; but as I find I have many circumstances yet to relate concerning it, I must be obliged to make it the subject of my next.—You will readily perceive, that I carefully avoid making an addition to the prolixity, by the insertion of any of my usual remarks or quotations.—In several places where my pen was about to take advantage of an opening, and set off, I have instantly checked it; lest whilst it should afford a relief to the sameness of the subject, it should run it into too great a length.—This inveterate prosecution, carried on against me because I would not conform to the abandoned wishes of the prosecutrix, proved a source of much unhappiness to me; I shall therefore hurry through the relation of it as fast as possible; at once to put an end to the corrosive reflections which torture my mind as I write it, and to carry you with all dispatch through a scene that can give you no great pleasure.—For, whilst I strive to preserve your friendship, and to regain the good opinion of the world, by a narrative of the most interesting events of my

my life, I should think myself undeserving of both, was I to spare any pains to render it as pleasing and entertaining as it lies in my power to do.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXV.

October 23, 17—.

AS soon as I was settled in my new residence, I sent to Counsellor Murphy, to request his advice and assistance. He undertook, with the greatest alacrity, to try to prevail on my opponent to receive the money, agreeable to the former settlement. If he could not effect this, he assured me he would undertake my cause, and exert his utmost abilities in my defence. Numerous were the presents which I received whilst I continued in the Rules; particularly from Earl Spencer and General Monckton, who both possessed the soul of generosity.

Mrs. Stacie took lodgings in the house adjoining to where I was, for herself, her maid servant, and little boy; and her husband sent me every delicacy the season afforded. This, although every thing was undoubtedly to be paid for, I could not but esteem a great mark of respect and attention.

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An accident happened at this time which greatly alarmed me, and threatened to bring the scenes I have been describing, to a premature and dreadful *dénouement*. I had discharged my lodging in town, together with my footman and maid-servant; I had sent my black to Mr. Woodward, and kept only my old Grace, a black-bird, and a favourite dog.

The latter had for some days appeared to be ill, and refused all food; when upon my calling him, in order to induce him to eat, the little animal flew to me, with seeming fondness, and fixed his teeth in my upper lip. Mr. Woodward, who happened to be present, instantly exclaimed, "I hope you "do not bleed." This, with my observing affectionate apprehensions in the looks of every person in the room, made me conclude the dog to be mad, and that I should partake of his malady. I was consequently seized with inexpressible horrors, to which the gloom of my situation made no inconsiderable addition; and if I did not fear death itself, yet I could not help being shocked when I imagined him to be approaching, armed with unusual terrors.

It is well known, that dangers appear much more alarming in apprehension than in reality. My feelings upon the present occasion confirmed this truth; for Mr. Bromfield, who had been sent for as soon as

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the accident happened, declared that I felt infinitely more than if the salival infection had operated with its full force. Such a deep impression did this event make on my mind, that for several years after, I was in agonies upon the anniversary of the day on which it happened.

Mr. Woodward endeavoured to persuade me, that there was not the least room for me to give way to these apprehensions. He assured me the next morning, that the creature followed him home, the preceding evening, and swam over a piece of water which lay in the way; an indisputable proof, that it was perfectly free from every symptom of the hydrophobia. But his ordering it to be hanged, the moment he got home, seemed to prove, that what he said was rather to dispel my fears than his real sentiments.

As I continued to be indisposed, my appearance in public would have been impracticable. I was not even able to leave my room; upon which account, I did not regret the loss of liberty so much as I otherwise should have done. Particular orders were given, that I should not be left alone; and the Richmond company being returned to winter quarters, I had my much-loved Miss Wordley constantly with me. Our affection for each other was so fervent and reciprocal, that she seemed to suffer equally with

with myself; and she was continually unhappy, left the uncommon melancholy by which I was overwhelmed, should end in a hasty decline. Nothing could exceed the attention she paid to me. She watched every alteration in my temper or health with the most anxious solicitude; and as she was now my bed-fellow, if I even stirred, I found her awake. This affectionate concern, at length caused a visible alteration in *her* health; which contributed more to facilitate my recovery, than it was in the power of medicine to do. I determined to be well, that my much-esteemed friend might be the same; and my exertions succeeded.

Mr. Murphy, to whom I acknowledge myself under the greatest obligations, came over to me as often as his other avocations would permit. He had endeavoured to prevail upon my revengeful creditor to settle the affair, but without effect. There was consequently no alternative but bringing it to trial. Mr. Jennings, of Carey-street, was my voluntary attorney upon this occasion. Being desirous to have a cause, of which he had the conducting, come on before his great General, his business hitherto being only with bailiffs and arrests, he applied to Mr. Stacie, and offered me his assistance without fee or reward. He thought he should be fully repaid by the credit he should gain from

from the employ, and being introduced thereby into better company than he had been used to. As he was known to be a good solicitor, Mr. Woodward accepted his service in my behalf; and in requital, employed him till his death.

As I was assured of success, the approach of the trial gave me rather pleasure than pain. At length the expected day arrived; and Mr. Murphy entered my apartment, almost breathless, to announce my triumph. But I was disappointed in reaping the advantages I should have done from my success, by the lady's dying soon after. Had she lived, and I had renewed my suit in the court of King's Bench, there is no doubt but I should have obtained a severe decree against her. The method she made use of to augment her debt, by purchasing others, being, as I have been informed, against the laws of this country.

I wrote immediately to thank my honourable patron; who answered me, and wished, as I had now established my protection, that I would, if possible, settle the debt, for the reasons he had before alledged. Application was accordingly made to Mrs. Ray's executors, who had agreed to take two hundred pounds down, and two hundred more at the expiration of a year. I have reason to believe my adversaries would have been gainers, by accepting my offer when it was first made,

made, as the suit must have cost them a very considerable sum. By the generous assistance I received from my kind friends, it was not attended with any loss to me.

Thus ended an event which had caused me so much anxiety, and had been the means of my first experiencing the *greatest* of all losses, *the loss of liberty* *. "For disguise
" thyself how thou wilt, still slavery,"—as
" my favourite Sterne says,—still thou art a
" bitter draught; and though thousands, in
" all ages, have been made to drink of
" thee, thou art no less bitter on that ac-
" count."—Feeling with equal sensibility, from having been deprived of her protection, the force of that inimitable writer's subjoined address to *Liberty*, though written only from imagination, I cannot refrain from making use of it, upon this occasion, to express my own sentiments.—"It is thou,
" thrice sweet and gracious Goddess, whom
" all in public or in private worship, whose
" taste is grateful, and will be so, till NA-
" TURE herself shall change—No tint of
" words can spot thy snowy mantle, nor
" chymic power turn thy sceptre into iron.
" —With thee to smile upon him as he
" eats his crust, the swain is happier than
" the monarch, from whose court thou art
" exiled."

* Sterne's Sentimental Journey, Vol. II. Page 87.

I had sent to the proprietors, to let them know that I should be able to perform on the tenth of November; and as I had taken the lodging I was in for a certain term, I chose to reside there till the expiration of it. Accordingly at that time I obtained a day rule, and went to the theatre, but I found that my service was not needful. All the performers seemed happy to see me at liberty; the manager alone appeared to be indifferent about it, having been influenced by his co-partner, Mrs. Rich, who had resolved that her cousin, Miss Wilford, should supersede me.

Prepossession has great weight with the world in general. Humanity, however, is the leading characteristic of this nation. The public, consequently, would not suffer *a child of their favour* to be oppressed, even though they were to be entertained by what was supposed rising merit. The proprietors had taken advantage of my unhappy situation, to introduce the young lady just mentioned in Cordelia. I could not with propriety object to this arrangement, but the public, being partial in my favour, did for me. This induced the proprietors to announce me.

Upon this occasion, as the daughter of misfortune, I was to be visited by some unforeseen event, that should tend to perplex and

and distress me. My maid had put into the coach, which took me to the theatre, a box, containing my remaining ornaments (which, indeed, were not of any great value) together with the properties I wanted for that night, and by some means or other it was lost. Among the former were some miniature portraits; *one* of which, and a locket, I sincerely regretted; as I also did the bracelets, left me by my deceased friend Miss Meredith.

The gain was trivial to the finder, but of such consequence *to me*, that I offered a reward of fifty pounds, though without success. A similar misfortune happened to me once before. Some years back, I unfortunately dropped a pocket-book in the Green Park, wherein there were four bank notes of one hundred pounds each. This I likewise had advertised, promising to give up the notes, with a large reward besides, if the person who had found it would send a paper which was therein. That advertisement had met with no better success than the present. Indeed I was informed, that I had acted wrong in making such an offer, as the acceptance of it would come under the denomination of felony. I am, however, not without any suspicions, that *another person* found an advantage in my loss. But as this is only conjecture, I shall drop all thoughts of *my loss* for ever;

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not doubting, but that even-handed justice will return the ingredients of the poisoned chalice, if not in "the corrupted currents of this world, where offence's gilded hand may shove by justice ; and oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself buys out the law ; it will above, where there is no shuffling ; where the action lies in it's true nature ; and we ourselves are compelled, even to the teeth and forehead of our faults, to give in evidence *."

The dilemma I was thrown into by the loss of my box, greatly increased the anxiety I felt from appearing for the first time after my confinement ; to which an ignominy is usually annexed, however undeserved that confinement may have been. I was so curtailed in my dress by the loss, that I was obliged to borrow even an under-petticoat. At length I was supplied with every necessary by the kind attention of Mrs. Whitfield, my dresser ; as I have since lain under greater obligations to this worthy woman, as will be seen in the sequel, I think it proper to mention her name, and to add, that she is an honour to humanity. The public received me with marks of the warmest approbation.

The loss of my box made me resolve not to run the risque of meeting with such

* Hamlet, Act III. Scene VIII.

an untoward accident again. I therefore changed my plan of residing in my present lodging, and took one in Suffolk-street.

The tragedy of "King Lear" was announced, in which Miss Wilford had appeared in Cordelia at the last representation. Mr. Younger, the prompter, who had the best of hearts, imagined, by the reception I met with upon my late performance, that no manager would endeavour to add to my depression, by forcing upon the public a person of whom they did not approve; he therefore obliterated her name, and put mine in the bills.

At twelve o'clock, I received a visit from Mr. Gibson, the deputy-manager, who informed me of the mistake, and requested that I would give up the part; telling me at the same time, that the managers would, upon my doing so, give out hand-bills to announce the error to the public. I was not *then* divested of that disposition which spurns at injuries. I felt the affront with more irascibility, than prudence perhaps would have permitted; but *prudence* was a virtue which, at that period, my best friends did not allow me to be possessed of; nor could I, indeed, with justice, lay any claim to it. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that I considered the consequences that should result from whatever answer I might give.

I instantly replied, “ I am *an indulged servant* of the public, and let what will happen, I will not suffer my name to be altered; but play the character *I will.*” Mr. Gibson then left me, with seeming regret, declaring I should draw upon me the hatred of the family. To which I answered with some warmth, “ I have long set that at nought; I neither covet their favour, nor fear their malice. I depend upon that patronage I have ever met with; and will stand or fall by that candour and indulgence, I have always been treated with by the publice.”

Upon sending my servant to look at the play-bills, she brought me word that the men were at that moment changing them; and that the mistake was pointed out in a Nota-Bene. Hearing this, I instantly sent to have hand-bills printed, and distributed among the audience as they went into the house. In this bill I only mentioned the circumstance which had occasioned it, simply as it was; at the same time telling them, that as I esteemed myself the acknowledged child of their favour, I thought it my duty to be ready in case I should, that evening, be honoured with the preference.

When the curtain drew up, there was an universal cry for your humble servant; and upon Cordelia’s appearance, notwithstanding she was the favoured child of the fami-
lies

lies of the Rich's and the Wilford's, she was obliged to withdraw and give place to me. Being ready dressed for the character, I immediately made my *entrée*, amidst an universal applause; and I do not recollect that I ever met with more tokens of approbation, in so trivial a character, during my theatrical existence.

This event was the more flattering, as it assured me, that I was still held in estimation by the public. It might be alledged, that my fair rival, *who was undoubtedly an excellent dancer*, had not then arrived at any reputation as a tragedian; and the visible depression of a declared partiality, might strongly operate in my favour.

The young lady, whose mortification, it must be supposed, was very great, came into the green-room, and said, she was surprized any performer would presume to affront Mrs. Rich. I could have told her, that her good cousin affronted the public much more, by forcing her *then* uninformed relation upon them; but as I neither dreaded the frowns of the Lady Directress, nor hoped for her favour, I held the little Cordelia's speech in too much contempt to make any reply to it.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXVI.

November 6, 17—

AT the conclusion of this season my agreement at Covent-Garden expired; and at the same time the patent was disposed of to Messrs. Colman, Harris, Powell, and Rutherford. Hearing nothing for some time from Mr. Colman, who was the acting manager, relative to a renewal of my articles, I gave over all hopes of an engagement with them; however, Mr. Woodward called upon me one day, and informed me, that he had had an interview with the commandant, in which, having enquired whether I was engaged by them, our modern Terence had replied, “Yes! I depend upon her; but multiplicity of business has prevented me from calling upon her, I shall be obliged to you, if you will inform her, that I propose doing myself the pleasure very soon.”

I was not only happy at being assured of a new engagement, but being under the direction of a manager, whose knowledge and talents I held in the highest estimation. Accordingly, the next day, I had the satisfaction of having my articles renewed for three years; and being, as I thought, upon favoured terms of opinion with Mr. Colman, I supposed

supposed I should be restored, by the preference he would shew me, to my former eligible situation in the theatre. Actuated by this hope, I determined to spare no pains, in order to merit his continued approbation.

As Mr. Alderman Cracroft had lately married the beautiful Miss Drax, he was employed in a higher circle than formerly, and had declined receiving and paying my salary among my creditors. Whilst I was an inhabitant of St. George's-fields, he sent over to desire I would give him a fresh security for what I owed him, and I feel a sensible concern when I reflect that I never saw him more.

Mr. Powell, of the Pay-Office, whose premature death furnished, not long ago, a topic for general conversation, took upon him the execution of this trust during one season; but as it was attended with some trouble, he, at the end of that time, thought fit to decline it. This, I must acknowledge, I considered as very strange, and rather unkind; as I had every right to expect his friendship, from my having been the first means of his being introduced to Mr. Fox, though I only knew him as deputy-treasurer of Covent-Garden theatre. Undoubtedly he was possessed of every requisite for business; but when he came to be a great man, he, like many others, kicked down the ladder by which he had mounted.

As Mr. Woodward had shewn a friendly forwardness to serve me upon every occasion, and his integrity was so well known, I requested him to take upon himself the employment. This he did, and all my creditors were well pleased with the nomination. His punctuality was such, that he left the dividend at his chambers, in Clement's-Inn, sealed up for each separately; so that if he happened to be from home, they had not the trouble of calling a second time: and as he likewise left the receipts ready written, they were detained no longer than whilst they signed their names.

Such punctuality and attention, must secure persons the respect and good-will of all those who happen to have business with them.—Punctuality in every concern, is not less laudable than its concomitant, honesty.—It is not, indeed, usually considered as a principle of equal import; the advantages arising to society from it will, however, be found to be very little short of those resulting from the latter.—Were it more attended to, how would it smooth the intercourse between man and man; especially those who constitute the commercial part of a people! So conspicuously needful is an attention to it, that what I have said in some of my former letters, relative to the observance of a promise, (and as I am an enthusiast in that point, my enforcement of it has not been luke-warm)

warm) will equally suit the virtue I am here recommending; for a *virtue* it is, though not one of the cardinal ones.

We opened the campaign with some eclat, as Mr. Powell was justly admired; and there is no doubt but he would have proved an ornament to the stage, had he had time to acquire that knowledge which is requisite to make the profession a science. But very few give themselves leisure, or take the trouble, to arrive at the goal. The intense application I have pointed out on a former occasion, is absolutely indispensable for arriving at perfection.—For want of this, many who possess great abilities, reach only mediocrity.

Our first appearance together was in Jaffier and Belvidera; and he was so extravagant in his encomiums upon my playing, that I had every reason to believe he had given over all thoughts of an engagement with Mrs. Yates. That he had this in view, was reported, and carried with it an air of probability; for, exclusive of the lady's extraordinary merit, it was natural to suppose he must entertain a partiality for the first heroine he ever appeared with.

In a few days the report of an engagement with Mrs. Yates was revived; and Mr. Colman called upon me, to inform me, that such a step was absolutely necessary, as it would be a great bar to their success, should she be engaged at Drury-lane, for which a treaty

was then in agitation. At the same time he assured me, that no engagement whatever should injure *me*. Indeed, that it would rather be the reverse; as many pieces might be revived, in which we might *shine* (as he was pleased to express himself) together. Besides which, I should retain *most* of my characters, if not all of them.

Perfectly satisfied in this assurance, and having always been a warm admirer of Mrs. Yates's talents, I was really pleased at the engagement, instead of feeling any envious emotions. But I have some reason to believe, that she was of another opinion; for upon my going up to her, at the first rehearsal, in order to salute her, and congratulate myself, she very coldly received my greeting, and we did not afterwards speak. I have more than once said, I never was susceptible of the mean passion of envy; I therefore could not help being hurt at even a supposition's arising in my mind, that she could harbour an idea of my being capable of dissimulation. Whenever a coolness continues for any time between people who are obliged in business to meet, disgust is generally the consequence. I frankly own this was the case with me. Mrs. Yates is the best judge of her own feelings upon the occasion.

A little time after, Mr. Colman introduced a young lady, by name Morris, in his play of the "English Merchant," in which she met with

with great approbation. She afterwards appeared in Juliet. As her youth and attractions were what Juliet should be, it would have been absurd to a degree, had I objected to her playing it; notwithstanding, at that period, it was not common to take the capital performer's characters from them, except for a person of acknowledged merit.

This fair flower, like the lily of the valley, reared a while her head, displayed her beauties to the sun, and diffused around the sweetest odours—But transient as the lily was her fate—Like her lovely emblem surcharged with rain, she soon dropped, and charmed no more.—So eager was the grisly monster death to seize such perfection, and so hasty were his strides, that she was unable to appear at her own benefit in the character of Juliet. I was therefore solicited by her relations to perform that part, which I did with the greatest readiness, sincerely regretting at the same time the untimely decay of such promising merit, which probably would have adorned the stage with another Farren.

Before the conclusion of the winter, the other two proprietors complained they were made cyphers. They alledged that Mr. Colman and Mr. Powell arrogated all the power to themselves, and were so expensive in the clothes and decorations, that they shared nothing, notwithstanding the houses

in general were crowded. Mr. Powell and I seldom spoke, but upon the stage. As I had every reason to believe he had acted with duplicity, I naturally despised him; I therefore seldom went to the theatre, except when business called me.

About this time I was introduced to the worthy and celebrated Mr. Hoole, the justly admired translator of Metastasio, Tasso, and most of the great Italian poets. His lady and myself formed the strictest intimacy, and we were seldom separate. When I had leisure from my attendance at Golden-Square, we had little parties, either at my apartments or theirs. A relaxation of this nature was necessary to dispel the chagrin I felt, that all my visionary theatric castles were tottering.

Such indeed has been the sure consequence, of every favourable event of my life. I have always found that even those expectations which have seemed most certain, have vanquished like Sancho Panza's supper. They have been seen, but not enjoyed.—And as the delicate viands which were spread before the hungry governor served only to increase his appetite, so my sanguine *certainties*, and sure expectancies, have led me into many expences, which, but for the flattering prospects these presented, I should not have incurred. A review of the incidents of my life, when they are all laid

laid before you, will convince you, that never mortal found such a number of apparently well-grounded hopes, so fatally and completely blasted; and that by means which were not to be expected or avoided. I may with propriety exclaim upon this occasion with the fourth Harry *,

" Will fortune never come with both hands full,

" But write her fair words still in foulest letters ?"

The ensuing summer I took a small house at Strand in the Green. The situation was beautiful, as it commanded the finest part of the Thames, and terminated with a view of Kew-bridge. Its being so near town was another inducement; for my attendance at the Comte's was almost daily expected.

When the next season commenced, the disagreement between the patentees became public. This broke out afresh, upon account of a very strange dispute indeed; which was no other, than Mr. Colman's insisting that Mrs. Yates should appear in the character of Imogen, in "Cymbeline;" a part in which she had long been established, and universally admired; and Messrs. Harris and Rutherford being equally strenuous that Mrs. Lessingham should have the preference. The

* Second Part of Henry IV. Act IV. Scene VIII.

beauty and figure of the latter were, I allow, greatly in her favour; but she could by no means be said to surpass Mrs. Yates, who joined *hard-earned* science to her other great qualifications. A process was begun in consequence of this rupture, which tended only to benefit the gentlemen of the long-robe; for in the sequel it produced no other effect.

Mr. Powell, induced by some reason I could never account for, began, once more, to load me with flattery; but as I had no room to believe his compliments sincere, I treated him with infinite contempt. Mrs. Yates was over-persuaded to appear in *Emilia*, in the “*English Merchant*;” a character, notwithstanding what I have said of her beauty, totally unfit for her; and I played *Lady Alton*, which would much better have become that dignity and figure which she possesses in so eminent a degree.

I am now about to enter upon a very important event in my life, viz. the means by which I was prevented from publishing my letter to Mr. Calcraft. Had it found its way to the public *at that time*, it would, I flatter myself, have avenged me in some measure of a man who had treated me with such unparalleled injustice, and have vindicated my conduct, with respect to him, to the whole world. But as I was prevailed upon, I may say compelled, not to do it then, when it would have been of much more service to

me, and have prevented many misfortunes which have since happened to me, I shall, as I have already promised you, send it to you by way of supplement to my narrative; for without it, many circumstances in my life will want elucidation.

As it makes so interesting a part of my story, I shall begin my next letter with it.—Nor will this be the only important circumstance that it will contain. You will read therein some other incidents, which will tend to confirm the observation I have lately made, that no mortal ever found their hopes so suddenly and completely frustrated as I have done.

G. A. B.

L. B. T.

LETTER LXXXVII.

November 14, 17—

THE day of the representation of the “English Merchant,” as mentioned in my last, I had caused an advertisement to be inserted in all the public papers, to the following purport: “Speedily will be published, a letter from George Ann Bellamy, to John Calcraft, Esq; with this motto;

“ So comes the reck’ning when the banquet’s o’er,
“ The dreadful reck’ning, and men smile no more.”

GAY.

Just before the piece was going to begin, Mr. Colman came into my dressing-room, and informed me, that in consequence of my advertisement, Mr. Calcraft had been at his house, vowing vengeance against the theatre, if I did not promise to give up all thoughts of such a publication; which, he said, was *at once putting a dagger into his heart, and a pistol to his head*. He concluded, with many imprecations, that if I did not at least give some time, he would not only put his threats into execution, but apply to the Lord Chamberlain to have me silenced; and,

and, moreover, turn my children adrift, who should perish before he would afford them any assistance.

Mr. Colman expressed some displeasure at the rudeness of Mr. Calcraft's behaviour, who departed abruptly. The manager, however, actuated, I doubt not, by a regard for me, used many arguments to induce me to give up the point. Among others, he desired me to remember that I was playing under a letter of licence, and consequently, by persisting, I should greatly injure my creditors. To this he added every inducement that seemed likely to succeed. I was, however, still obstinate.

He then entreated, that I would only defer the publication till the end of the season. At length, yielding to his reiterated entreaties, I gave him my promise that I would consent to his wishes: a promise that I have never ceased repenting of, from the hour in which I made it, to the present: for had I persevered in my intention, the world would have been clearly convinced of the cruelty with which I had been treated.

But Mr. Calcraft was not indebted to me in the least for this compliance. The esteem and regard I entertained for the gentleman who negociated the affair, was my only inducement. To him, and not to my betrayer, was the concession made. I was so exasperated at his having propagated a report that

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our separation was occasioned by some gallantries of mine, particularly with the Earl of Harrington, (as I have hinted before, and shall further explain in my letter) that I ought in justice to myself to have exposed his fallacies at the time.

But it was always to be my lot unfortunately to be over-ruled, when the steps I was about to take were dictated by prudence. I can only attribute my imprudent concession, in this case, to the instigation of that evil genius, who generally counteracted every design which seemed to be for my good. Not but that I am perfectly satisfied Mr. Colman had no other motive for his solicitations than friendship; and this weighed much with me. The consideration of his own interest was out of the question; for had Mr. Calcraft and his associates, done any injury to the theatre, persons of such over-grown fortunes would doubtless have made ample amends for whatever loss the proprietors might have sustained. There was, in short, a fatality in it, the current of which I could not stem.

The following circumstance will likewise prove, that the same evil genius, or some other undiscoverable cause, usually prevented me from pursuing the path that led to my welfare. The rupture between the proprietors was now come to a crisis. This, as I was informed, rendered it necessary for Mr. Colman to get a paper signed by the performers,

formers, expressing their approbation of his management, and containing an acquiescence to be guided by his direction.

This paper the manager brought to me, and desired I would sign it. Upon which I frankly told him, that as I was engaged to *all four* of the proprietors, it did not appear to me, at first sight, to be prudent to sign any paper giving one a preference over the others. To which he replied, that as by the articles which subsisted between him and the other proprietors, he was allowed to be the only *acting manager*, he could see no impropriety in my signing a paper which merely related to that right. He then added, that he was so well assured I should, upon due reflection, be of his way of thinking, that he would leave the paper with me, and eat a chop with me the next day.

Mr. Colman was scarcely gone, before Mr. Rutherford and Mr. Woodward came in; and, I have some reason to think, on the same business; as the former immediately exclaimed, "have you signed it?" Upon my answering in the negative, but acknowledging that the paper was left with me for my consideration, Mr. Rutherford wanted me to shew it to him. This I absolutely refused to do; saying, I wondered any gentleman who professed liberal sentiments could advise a breach of trust. He told me that if he had got hold of it, he would have burnt it, as he

he was sure two capital performers had signed it, who would not have done so, had another paper been presented in their favour. Upon which I repeated what I had said before; adding, that I thought it, though trifling in itself, a breach of trust; and it therefore became an indispensable duty for me to keep it unseen. As soon as I had said this, Mr. Rutherford went away in anger.

Mr. Woodward remained behind, and made use of every argument to dissuade me from signing it. He dwelt particularly upon the ill treatment I had received from Mr. Colman. This, however, I ought to have attributed to Powell, not Colman. But at length tired out with Mr. Woodward's solicitations, urged by my gratitude to him, and instigated by my usual indiscretion, I consented to his request. I accordingly sent back the paper to Mr. Colman, with a card inclosed, acquainting him that I desired to decline signing it; but hoped my refusal would not prevent me the favour of his company, agreeable to his own invitation. That gentleman, however, took no notice of my card, and from that time we became *totally* strangers. Thus was I once more over-persuaded, contrary to my own judgment, to pursue a measure, which, as will be seen in the sequel, turned out to be the most detrimental to my interest I could have chosen.—But the following

following unlucky incident will serve to prove more strongly than either of the foregoing, that I am no favourite of Madam Fortune's. A combination of circumstances conspired to blast my long encouraged hopes in the moment of completion, and furnishes another proof, among the many I have already given, of the truth of * Hamlet's assertion, that

" There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
" Rough-hew them how we will."

About the conclusion of this season, Mr. Powell came flushed into the Green-Room one evening, and informed me, that Mr. Bensley and he had dined at Lord Tyrawley's, where Miss Nancy O'Hara, who was his professed admirer, had mentioned in conversation, that I should soon have a considerable legacy left me, Lady Tyrawley being very ill. I usually had a summons every evening to wait upon her ladyship, and upon my returning home, I accordingly found one, requesting that I would go to Somerset-house; but being much indisposed from a violent cold, and greatly fatigued, as I had that night played Alicia, impelled by the same wayward destiny that had so often directed my determinations, I resolved to postpone my visit till the morning.

* Hamlet, Act V. Scene II.
I did

I did so; and about nine o'clock received a note from her ladyship's woman, informing me that her mistress had died at three that morning. She added, that his lordship had come at five, when he locked himself up, and after having examined all her ladyship's papers, had gone away, leaving strict orders with her not to have any communication whatsoever with *me*, upon pain of his displeasure. His lordship gave as a reason for this restriction, that he had found, during his rummage, a letter of mine, which had convinced him of what he had once doubted, of my having encouraged her ladyship to refuse his request, relative to cutting off the entail of an estate.

This, like many other of my imputed faults, originated from a mistake.—Indeed, most of the actions of my life have been in the same manner perverted; by which means I have been loaded with censures that I do not really deserve.—Errors enough I know I have been guilty of, but these have been so multiplied and misrepresented, that it is become necessary for me to lay a true statement of them before you and the world.—To know that your friendship has not been lessened by these misrepresentations, is one of the greatest blessings I at present enjoy.—I am sorry to say, that I fear the world too much delights in scandal, for me to hope that my conduct has been viewed by them in

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in the same favourable light.—I will, however, trust that these prejudices are not irremovable.—I will hope that when the account I am now employed on, reaches the public, it will be received with the same candour and kindness, with which my attempts to gain their favour in my theatrical profession were once rewarded.

But to return to his Lordship.—I think I informed you in one of the preceding letters, that Lord Tyrawley's private marriage with his lady, prevented him from receiving the fortune he expected to have had with her. Instead of which, when the separation between them took place, he was obliged to allow her a handsome income as his wife. His lordship likewise put her in possession of the apartments, plate, &c. &c. which my mother abdicated upon her quarrel with him, as related in the early part of my history.

Upon the death of Lord Blessington's son, Lady Tyrawley, and her brother the noble Earl, were the only persons in the entail of the family estate. Lord Tyrawley being at that time much distressed, from having a young family *laid* to him, which, in all probability he *could* have no right to, he applied to his lady to join in cutting off the reversion, that he might be able to dispose of it.

I have already acquainted you with most of the particulars of that application from his lordship, and of the letters which passed
between

between them upon the occasion, but some continuation is now necessary. At the time this happened, I was at Hollwood. Her ladyship sent me her husband's first letter, and seemed by the conclusion of her own to say, that she was determined to refuse his lordship's request; as she meant every thing she had to leave, as an addition to my daughter's fortune. I answered her ladyship's letter, thanking her in the strongest terms for her friendship; and, without any explanation, said, I send the inclosed; whereas I ought to have distinguished it by saying, I return, &c. In this state my letter was found at Somerset-house, and my good patron, friend, father, or lord, seemed to believe from it, that his wife's refusal proceeded from my advice. I was thus considered as guilty, and immediately condemned at his house in Leicester-fields, where the family were no friends to me. No will was brought forth; and I never saw his lordship after, but once in the Green-room, and at his own house, when he was first confined by the disorder which carried him off.

Have I not reason, think you, to complain once more of the unkind attacks of fortune? Was it possible to suppose that such untoward circumstances would have stepped between me and my hopes, so well-founded as they were? Yet, why should I expect stability in that wheel, which from my earliest

liest years, as you have seen, has been subject to sudden and unexpected revolutions. So often have occasions presented themselves for making this remark, that I really fear they begin to appear tiresome repetitions.— May not however these disappointments have been intended by the all-wise Disposer of events, to promote my real good!—That great moralist Shakspere*, speaking of the blindness of mortals in their wishes, tells us, that

“ We ignorant of ourselves,
“ Beg often our own harms ; which the wise powers
“ Deny us for our good : so find we profit
“ By losing of our prayers.”

Let me then indulge the thought ; and endeavour to dispel the gloom, which, when viewed in another light, they cast over the mind.

When Lord Tyrawley was taken ill, led by that respect and affection which I had always entertained for his Lordship, I went to pay my duty to him. Upon my entrance, I had the mortification to be repulsed by a domestic, who told me that Miss O'Hara knew my sensibility to be too great to bear the sight of so conspicuous a character, when degenerated into idiotism ; and the † conversation

* Antony and Cleopatra, Act II. Scene I.

† During the masquerade, I reproached her as she sat in the stage-box, for her partiality to one of the performers.

I had

I had with her during the masquerade in "Man and Wife," the last time she saw me on the stage, had convinced her that I could not possibly have any passion but contempt for her. She therefore would not give me the trouble of an interview with a person to whom I had shewn so many marks of dislike.

I found all my passions awakened by this insulting message; and forced my way, in spite of every opposition, into his Lordship's apartment. But how shall I describe the melancholy spectacle which there presented itself! My heart bleeds at the very recollection of it. There, alas! I beheld that great man, who had shone, brightly shone, both in the field and cabinet; "for when a soldier was the theme, his name was not far off;" who had with honour filled places of the highest trust and confidence; and had been one of the first ornaments of this country; sunk into a state of debility and idiotism. His Lordship was sitting up in his bed, wrapped in a scarlet gown. His eyes were sunk; his tongue was lolling out on one side of his mouth; and he appeared to be counting his fingers.—Heavens! what a sad reverse!

With a heart bursting with fondness and grief, I knelt down by the side of the bed, and taking hold of one of his hands, bathed it with my tears. I then fervently kissed it,

in hopes that would draw his attention towards me, and cause him to recollect me.—Instead of which, after some time, he whispered, “Send Aby,” “I want Aby.” “Why does not Aby come?” meaning Aby Fisher. Hearing him thus speak with some degree of rationality, I requested that he would look upon me; and said every thing that I thought would revive his recollection—but, ah! in vain.

Hearing only the same discordant notes repeated from those lips, whose every sound was once harmony to my ears, I quitted the room, shocked beyond measure with the sight I had beheld; a sight which recalled to my memory the similarity of his Lordship’s situation with that of his *great General*, who had taught him the way to glory, and who had experienced like him a second childhood.

As I went to my chair, I was told by an old domestic, that the ungrateful young man he had called for, who had been fostered by his Lordship’s humanity, after having been introduced, when an infant, in a basket, or by some other unaccountable means, from the gate of his Lordship’s house at Blackheath, now even refused to give his patron the only pleasure he was capable of receiving, that of *seeing* him play upon the violin; for, as his Lordship was totally bereft of the sense of hearing, consequently his talents, as to *sound*, were useless.

Nay, so far had his Lordship's partiality for him gained ground, that having, after some time, recovered a ray of reason, he informed his son, the present gallant General, or else directed Miss O'Hara to acquaint him, that he must provide himself with a lodging, as Mr. Fisher, (the present amiable Doctor) could not be dislodged.—Thus are nature, and every tender innate feeling, deadened, if not totally destroyed, by the designing, dissipated, ungenerous person, who continually is in the presence of the declining invalid, and which generally ends in obtaining a perfect command.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Nov. 23, 17—

MY visit to Lord Tyrawley had so great an effect upon my mind, that I was immediately attacked with a disorder which carried with it a probability of proving fatal; and it certainly would have done so, had I been called by the prints to the theatre, and been unable to have done my duty there: But Mr. Colman prevented me from experiencing so mortifying a trial, by introducing, at the beginning of this season, (the second of my present articles) a young woman named Miller.

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This person had nothing to recommend her but the acting managers favour, a circumstance which plainly evinces the unlimited power of gentlemen in that department; who we see, from this instance, can dare to *foist* upon the public *any being* for whom they may have conceived a partiality, or whom they intend to set up as a mark of resentment against another performer. Had I now possessed the same spirit I did when the pretty Cordelia appeared, who indeed had youth and elegance to boast of, the manager might not have found the task he had undertaken so easy as he did; but my silence upon the occasion, which proceeded from a consciousness of indiscretion, and the constant disappointment of my hopes, made my passiveness appear the effect of indisposition; consequently this *puppet* was permitted to go on, though a very, very indifferent substitute.

When the benefits came to be settled, my illness obliged me to fix upon a piece in which I could appear without much exertion. Andromache, in "The Distress" "Mother," seemed as suitable as any, that play being esteemed the strongest in the company; Mr. Powell playing Orestes, Mrs. Yates, Hermione, and myself Andromache. Having never been accustomed to *ask* as a favour, what I imagined I had a right to *expect*, I did not apply to Mrs. Yates to per-

form her part ; as she had lately played it, I had no apprehension of her not doing it now. What the custom might be at present, I am unacquainted with ; but at that time it was unusual to *request* a performer's appearance, unless a new part was to be studied.

However, upon the play being advertised, I received a note from the intended Helen's daughter, in a high stile indeed ; to this I replied ; and, in a few days, I was not a little surprised to see the dejected Trojan Queen's correspondence with the beautiful Grecian Princess, in the public papers. I am sure Mrs. Yates's behaviour upon this occasion, must have been the consequence of some misrepresentation, as I have since had the strongest instances of this lady's humanity and proffered civility, which indeed I could have no possible right to expect.

When this affair became public, my good friend, her Grace of Queensberry, sent for me to enquire what could occasion such a rupture. I told her Grace that I was totally ignorant of the cause, but was concerned at the loss of so capital a performer, let it proceed from what cause it would. She answered that it was very immaterial as to the boxes ; for my avowed patroness, her sister Douglas, (an assumed title for the Dutchess) who had been some time in town, but could not appear in public till the great cause then pending

ing was determined, had requested her to take care of my benefit. "As if," continued her Grace, "I wanted Peg's recommendation to patronize you!" Then looking very significant, she said, "I suppose you recollect I was one of the first that noticed you?" I replied, she had done me that honour. "It was an honour," added she, "and a very great one, if you knew all; for I not only then gave you good advice, but have only been once at a play since I found you did not follow that advice." I coloured; which her Grace perceiving, she immediately turned the discourse, and began to consult what piece I should have.

Just at that instant her grace of Douglas was announced. Next to sincerity, gratitude is the most susceptible feeling of my heart. My sensations, therefore, at hearing that revered name, are scarcely to be conceived or described. I believe Penelope was not more happy in meeting her long-lost Ulysses; nor Achilles his Patroclus; or, to bring the comparison nearer home, a fond love-sick girl to see the object of her affections, than I was to meet this best of women; whose every little civility seemed to contain so much good-nature, with such sincere marks of regard, that they made an impression which can never be eradicated from my mind.

Upon this lady's entrance, her copartner in the tambour accosted her with, " I am " glad you are come. How go affairs on " in the House of Lords ?" To which interrogation the visitor replied, " That she had the greatest reason to hope for success, as well from the justice of the cause, as from the equity of the court before which it was; whose decisions were so judicious, that they were scarcely ever repined at, even by those who lost what they contended for."

" Well!" returned her Grace of Queensberry; " you must now decide what is to be " done in the court of Covent-Garden, upon " the second or third of April. Your Queen " of Troy is left alone; for the Grecian " Princess has declared that she shall meet " her Hector on the other side of the Sty- " gian Lake, before she will assist her." The universal laugh which this droll speech excited, was greatly increased by the inflexibility of the lady's countenance. As soon as the laughter was subsided, her Grace remarked, that notwithstanding the pleasantry which had just passed, the determination was of as much importance to *me*, as that of the great Douglas cause was to them, as I played under a letter of licence, and had nothing to support me but the produce of my benefit.

" Romeo and Juliet," " Venice Preserved," and " Cleone," were severally proposed, and all

all rejected, from my not being able to sustain my characters in them, through the weakness I was labouring under; at last her Grace concluded, assuming at the same time an air of as much importance, as if she had found out a method to pay off the national debt, that it must be the " Albion Queens." She thought, she said, upon recollection, that I was like Mary, Queen of Scots.

The latter part of the Dutchesse's speech overwhelmed me with confusion; when her Grace, laughing, said, she was glad to see, that after having been so many years in public, keeping such *fine* company, and having travelled so much, I betrayed such evident marks of modesty. The Dutchesse of Douglas chid her Grace, who certainly possessed the most feeling heart, notwithstanding it was contained in so rude a mould: Upon which she replied, "I suppose it will be a matter of pleasure, instead of mortification, when I inform Bellamy, that I have always enquired after her."— I bowed; the play was fixed on; and I very gladly took my leave.

I have already given you my sentiments upon her Grace's behaviour, and that at a time I was smarting under the lashes received at a former visit; I shall therefore only say here, that though I was sensible of the honour of being admitted to Queensberry-

House, which was always attended with pecuniary advantages even beyond my expectations, yet I would very willingly have declined the honour, and even these advantages, could I have done it without the imputation of disrespect and ingratitude, as I was sure of meeting with some sarcasm, which in a manner destroyed the benefit. Her Grace of Douglas engaged me to breakfast the next day, where, *tout à contraire*, I met with the most agreeable reception that real cordiality, unmixed with caprice, can bestow.

At length the day of my benefit came. The Douglas Cause was decided that day in their favour, to the very great mortification of the house of Hamilton. When my two patronesses appeared, the applause was great, but, upon the young gentleman's entering, it increased; and the Dutchess of Douglas making more courtesies upon the occasion than her companion thought needful, she leaned over the young gentleman who sat between them, and cried out, "Sit down, Peg!" This had such an effect upon me, who stood on the same side, ready to make my appearance, that I burst into such a fit of laughter as prevented me from going on immediately, as I ought to have done. But this was not all. Her Grace being in high good-humour, she kept calling out, occasionally, loud enough for

for me to hear, “ Well said, Mary ! ” “ Bravo, “ Mary ! ” which, united with the former, was very near turning the said story we were enacting, into a Tragi-Comedy ; for it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep my risible faculties in any decorum .

At the conclusion of the season, I found that it had turned out a very beneficial one . This arose not only from the patronage of the ladies already mentioned, and many others, but it received some addition from the generosity of an unexpected benefactor ; of which, though truly ridiculous in itself, I am tempted to give you the particulars ; as perhaps they may have the same effect upon your muscles, as the Dutches of Queensberry’s *verbal* applause had upon mine .

An old gouty Knight, Banker, and Alderman, had entertained a partiality for me . As his lady was an elegant and accomplished woman, and in possession of youth as well as a fortune, it is really to be wondered at that she should have sacrificed herself to waning age and disease, merely for the sake of a title . But my old friend verified the adage of “ *Tout jour perdri, ne vaut rien.* ” He had sent me at my benefit an extraordinary present ; and as his honour was not accustomed to do generous deeds, I might naturally have supposed that I was not to place it to the score either of humanity or liberality .

He accordingly called some days after, when he was informed that I was not at home; but suspecting the veracity of my servant, he went to some little distance, and ordered the house to be watched. In a short time after I went out; and whether his mercury had not readily found him, or his corpulence had curbed his activity, I cannot say, but he did not overtake my chair till I had reached Leicester-House.

I there heard a voice, seemingly of a person out of breath, cry, "Stop, chairmen, "stop." The two-legged poneys, however, continued their trot; at last a man, in a horseman's coat, came up to the side of the chair, and, in an imperative tone, commanded the chairmen to set down; he at the same time knocked at the side-window. I was greatly alarmed, and experienced perturbations for which I can no otherwise account, than from the uncommonness of the circumstance. I notwithstanding did as I was ordered; when, to my inexpressible surprise, I beheld my impassioned elder, who seemed to me to have broke his wind to shew his gallantry.

As he could not immediately speak, I asked him, repeatedly, what was the occasion of such madness? Upon which, unbuttoning his *surtout*, not only to recover breath, but to dazzle me with the gold lace upon his coat,

wisely judging, that as a woman I must be captivated by finery, he in a panting voice told me, he had given me a substantial proof of his affection at my benefit, besides thirty pounds, the balance of a former debt for money borrowed upon my jewels, and which he had never demanded.

Hearing this uncommon salutation, I desired my panting lover, in a very resolute tone, to go about his business; for, if he did not, I would inform his young lady of his depravity and folly. I then told him, that if ever he presumed, upon any account, to take such a liberty with me again, I was not so friendless, but that some person would interest themselves in my cause, and punish his insolence.

I had no sooner said this, than in an instant away my gentleman went; and notwithstanding I had been heartily frightened at his approach, yet to see the short squab skuttling away as if he had crackers at his tail, presented such a ridiculous scene, that I could not help bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter. In this I was joined by the very chairmen, who had heard the curious conversation, and had reconnoitred my Turtle-eater, so that it was some moments before they could take up their burthen, that is, their chair; for as for myself, I was reduced to my original gossomer.

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I afterwards mentioned the incident to one of his lady's intimates ; she was highly entertained with it, and declared, she would make her friend acquainted with it. She at the same time informed me, that this flower of gallantry, at home, appeared to be the most docile and fond help-mate she ever knew.

I never heard any more from or of this mirror of knighthood, till I read in the news-papers, some short time after, that he had made his *entrée* into the family vault. And I much fear the proof he gave of his activity upon the above-mentioned occasion, sent him some years sooner to his long home, than if he had acted the part of a sober citizen, and the discreet father of a numerous family. I am the more induced to draw this conclusion, from its being announced that his death was occasioned by an asthma, which proved fatal from the breaking of a blood-vessel.

Not long after, Mrs. Smith, a relation of the knight, (whom I have more than once mentioned) came to put me in mind of the thirty pounds I stood indebted to him, lest it should be demanded at an inconvenient time. As she informed me of his death, she accompanied the information with tears, the common tribute paid to a *worthy* cousin. Seeing which, I could not help telling her of his gallant attack upon me. As she was

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a pattern of virtue herself, she no sooner received the intelligence, than she wiped away the pearly drops, and had recourse to the other female weapon, by which she forcibly proved her inveterate abhorrence of connubial infidelity.

As I know not that I shall be able to terminate this letter with a more memorable incident than the foregoing, I will do so, ere the smile has left your face; for I am sure even my lifeless representation of it, must have raised that pleasurable appearance on your lovely countenance.—What hilarity would it have afforded you, had you been a disinterested spectator of the laughable scene!—I have no doubt but you would have enjoyed it even in a higher degree than I did.—Not even Shakspere's fat knight, in any of the humourous distresses his wanton attacks on the dames of Windsor led him into, could furnish you with a surer fund of mirth, than the amorous folly of my city knight would have done.

G. A. B.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Decem. 2, 17—

THE summer following, his majesty of Denmark visited England; when Mr. Garrick, who wanted performers, as all those belonging to the London theatres had by this

this time joined their several companies in their summer excursions, and none were to be collected upon the occasion but those at Richmond, made application to Mr. Woodward, and requested that he would ask me. I complied with great readiness, but upon condition that leave was obtained of the acting manager. Mr. Woodward thought this unnecessary, and said he intended applying to Mr. Harris, who would, no doubt, sign a liberty for me, at the same time he did for him.

The first piece we performed was the "Suspicious Husband," in which I played Clarinda. Upon my appearance, there was one person hissed. As this was a salutation I was not acquainted with, I could not help receiving pain from it; but upon Mr. Garrick's saying it was apparent malice, as the general opinion was evidently for me, I composed myself, and played as well as I could.

"The Provoked Wife" was the second piece that we performed, in which I appeared in the character of Lady Fanciful. In the last Act, the person, whose business it was, not having called me, Mr. Garrick was just going to be witty upon the occasion, as you may recollect my worthy friend, Mr. Quin, was upon my non-appearance, from a very particular incident, many years before; but my entering just as he had advanced for that purpose,

purpose, prevented his wit from being for that time made known; and I could never find out what occasion he would have fixed on to shew his satire.

I must here add, that the incidents may not be disunited, that the beginning of the next season, his Danish Majesty came to see "Jane Shore," at Covent-Garden, in which I played Alicia; when observing the royal visitor to prefer the charms of Somnus to the Tragic Muse, and unwilling that he should lose the *fine acting* it might be supposed he came to see, I drew near to his box, and with a most violent exertion of voice, which the part admitted, cried out, "Oh! thou "false Lord!" by which I so effectually roused his majesty, that he told the unfortunate Comte de Bathmore, (who, as I have already informed you, used to be a frequent visitor at my house) that he would not be married to a woman with such a bell voice, upon any account, as he should never expect to sleep.

This summer Mr. Powell died. The last time I ever saw him he requested my pardon, and assured me he would make atonement, the next winter, for the injury he had done me in my profession.

The concluding season of my agreement I was seldom called upon at the theatre; and indeed the severe indisposition I had undergone, had left me so weak, that I should have

have executed my duty with great difficulty, as I always made it an invariable rule to play when called upon, were I able to rise; nor did I ever engage persons to applaud me, or pay the doers of the papers to put in puffs to impose upon the public, under the signature of "Impartial Writers."

Now I am upon this subject, I will send you a specimen of the dependence that in general is to be placed on the accounts given in the papers by those sort of writers. Though it happened many-years before the period I am upon, yet it will not be the less *a-propos* here.

During the memorable run of "Romeo and Juliet," at Drury-Lane, the late Sir John Hill, who had not at that time been knighted, was the Editor of a news-paper; I think it was called the "Gray's-Inn Journal," but am not sure. In that paper, he did me the honour to be very lavish in my praise, for which I gave him credit, as I had not then the pleasure to know him.

Upon my return to Covent-Garden, he one evening swam into the Green-Room, during the representation of that play, and when I was called to go to the balcony, the scene on which he had been most exuberant in his eulogiums, he greatly astonished me by saying, "I must go and see it, for I hear it is the finest piece of acting in the whole performance." I could not resist turning back,

back, to ask him if he had not wrote a critique upon it? To which he replied, with a becoming *non chalance*, that he had written it from what he heard at the Bedford, and never till that evening had an opportunity of seeing it.

As "Romeo and Juliet," was a standing dish at both theatres, at that period, for two years running, it might be supposed that all the critiques of that gentleman, as well as the fraternity in general, were *equally* the result of observation and judgment. Indeed I believe most of the praise or censure we read in the papers, is put in by the partizans or enemies of the performers; except in new pieces, when the editors think it their duty to give the public, with an account of the performance, the merits or demerits of the actors and actresses.

Excuse this long digression. I will now return to my narrative.—This summer I was not only disengaged from the theatre, but from my employment at Comte Haslang's; which was occasioned by the following circumstance: I had borrowed, some time before, forty guineas of Mr. Woodward to pay his coal-merchant; for though I would not receive any pecuniary favours from that gentleman myself, I made no scruple to borrow of him to accommodate others. Mr. Woodward having now occasion for the money, and it not being in my power to repay it, I applied

applied to the Comte for it. His Excellency told me he had not that sum by him, but referred me to Mrs. Myers. You must know that this lady, who was the widow of his valet-de-chambre, had been his housekeeper, but at this period was translated to the high office of being his *gouvernante*; for as his Lordship was immersed in politics, the court, the club, and public places, he had not time to *manage himself*.

Being thus referred to her, I sent to speak with her in the anti-chamber, through which all the people of fashion pass to go to the chapel gallery. No pen can describe the ludicrous scene that passed upon the occasion; let it suffice to say, that the lady had no objection to a few oaths, and that she spoke plain English. At first it afforded diversion to the gentlemen who happened to be passing through the room; but at last, provoked by some words I unfortunately let drop, she poured such a torrent of gross abuse upon her Lord and benefactor, that I took myself off; and at the same time took such an aversion to her, that I declined going to the house; nor did I ever officiate more.

I now determined to retire to my house at Strand on the Green, and wait the issue of whatever should happen. In a short time I received a visit from Mr. Cook, a gentleman belonging to a particular department in the theatre,

theatre, who told me he was sorry to be the messenger of unwelcome news, but he came from Mr. Colman to inform me, that if I would accept of *six* pounds a week, he would engage me; if not, he should no longer look upon me as one of the company.

I could ill brook this message, as it was adding an insult to an affront. Had Mr. Colman sent me a discharge, it would have carried with it more of that candour by which his actions are generally guided; but as I had certainly treated that gentleman ill, I did not complain; conscious of my error, I hope he will forgive me when I declare, that I have shot my arrow o'er my head, which has recoiled and only hurt myself.

Mr. Harris called upon me that day, or the next, and seemed much hurt at the affair. He consoled me with the hopes of the suit being soon ended; when, he assured me, that I should be reinstated in my former situation.

A coolness had now taken place between Mr. Woodward, who boarded with me at Strand, and Mr. Hoole, about some advice the latter had given relative to a benefit. This was a severe stroke upon me, as it produced the same effect between the family and myself. My regard was sincere, and was increased by obligation.

I had bred up a near relation (a nephew) from

from an infant, in a manner which would be necessary to make him appear like a gentleman, in which line I had then reason to believe I should be able to maintain him. He was at Westminster, was placed in one of the first boarding-houses, and enabled to keep company with the principal boys in the school, not only for quality, but genius, to whom he seemed to give the preference. Among these, the Rev. Mr. Hayes, and Young Ford, son of Doctor Ford, both possessed of shining parts, were his particular intimates.

The alteration which had taken place in my circumstances, rendered an alteration in his mode of education needful; I therefore wrote to my mother, when I was in Scotland, desiring her to take him from Westminster, and place him where he might learn arithmetic; she accordingly did so, and I regularly sent the money to pay the expences. My young gentleman's pride was much hurt by this arrangement; but as Mr. Woodward had taken him to live at chambers with him, and indulged him in what he thought requisite, we never came to an explanation till the last winter.

I then informed him that I had found a capital house in the city that was willing to receive him; to which he replied, with all the consequence that would have become a Duke had he been insulted, that I might have

have saved myself the trouble, for I had bred him as a gentleman, and should support him as such. His insolence aggravating me, I asked him, with a supercilious smile, why he did not fly, and request the interest of his school-fellow, Sir Watkyn-Williams Wynne, of whose acquaintance he boasted so much? His answer was, before he would be a wretched dependent upon any man on earth, he would wait till he was of age to be enlisted, and prefer carrying a musket.

The spirit of the boy pleased me, and from that hour I resolved not to curb it. He was a great favourite in Mr. Hoole's family, and as that gentleman is possessed of one of the best of hearts, in addition to his other qualifications, it was not long before he obtained for my nephew a brevet in the honourable the East-India Company's service at Bombay.

The difficulty was how to fit him out. As my finances were but in an indifferent situation, I was obliged to try my credit; and failing in that, to the amount of about eighty or ninety pounds, I applied to Mr. Woodward, who said he would advance the money upon *his* bond; as he well knew, though a minor, his principles and honour were such as he could depend upon.

My worthy friend Mr. Hoole now introduced him to a gentleman of the India-House,

House, named Corbet; who not only lent him twelve guineas, but spoke to a Captain in his favour, and shewed him uncommon civilities. Besides this testimony of friendship, I was indebted to Mr. Hoole the sum of forty pounds, which I am sorry to say still remains unpaid. These circumstances undoubtedly made me feel this coolness more severely than otherwise I should have done, and I do not know that any deprivation of seeing real friends ever gave me such sensible pain.

But these revolutions in friendships are, I see, as certain and unavoidable, as the common vicissitudes in all human affairs. Even those which appear to be the firmest founded; which have a similarity of sentiment and disposition for their basis; are not sometimes proof against the feeblest blasts of discord.—How finely has my immortal poet described this frailty, and confirmed the foregoing observation*!

“ Oh! world, thy slippery turns! friends now fast
“ fworn,
“ Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
“ Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,
“ Are still together; who twine, as 'twere, in love
“ Unseparable; shall within this hour,

* Coriolanus, ACT IV. Scene III.

“ On

" On a dissension of a doit, break out
" To bitter enmity."

At the conclusion of the summer, Mr. Woodward engaged with his former opponent, Foote, to go to Scotland, and to play during the summer at the little theatre. As I had now no business to call me to town, I determined to remain at Strand, and divert myself with books, birds, and writing. I began a comedy; but unfortunately, Thalia had no sooner honoured me with a visit, than she was obliged suddenly to decamp, upon account of the return of a far more disagreeable visitant, the pain in my side; a guest with whose intrusions I had long been troubled, and of whom, notwithstanding all my endeavours, I could not totally get rid. This obliged me to come to town, as I had no opinion of any of the physical gentlemen but Mr. Adair, to whose skill and unremitting attention I had been frequently indebted.

I had now no dependence but on Comte Haslang's promised friendship, and a few jewels, the relicts of Miss Meredith's legacy, the very thoughts of parting from which, almost broke my heart. Notwithstanding this, I wrote to a lady, without considering her taste for expence, and the contracted state of my finances, to procure me a lodging for a few weeks, for myself and

and one maid-servant. Accordingly I set off the next day, leaving the cook, gardener, and footman, to take care of my treasure at Strand.

At the time Mr. Woodward first made the proposal to board with me, he had laid in wine, coals, candles, &c. &c. and insisted (as he had engaged for a year, and as he hoped I would permit him to return in the summer) upon paying the whole sum he had agreed for, notwithstanding his absence. All false punctilio ceased upon this occasion; and, when he set off for Scotland, he left me the quarter's money, together with all his writings, in a strong box.

Being unwilling to hazard a deposit of such importance in the country whilst I was away, I took this box with me to town; and finding a ray of my usual presentiment cross my mind just as I arrived in London, I instantly determined that I would not take it to Mrs. Moore's, (the Lady I had wrote to) though she lived in stile, and kept a number of servants; I therefore stopt at Mr. Colley's, in Grosvenor-street, and left it providentially in his care.

When I arrived in South Audley-street, I found Mrs. Moore extremely ill, lying upon a couch in her dressing-room, which was towards the street, her best rooms being backwards. She informed me, that her woman had taken a lodging for me, agreeable to my

my request ; and that it was in Leceister-street, at two guineas a week. This intelligence startled me, as I was mistress of but nine guineas ; and those were all I was certain of, till I should receive Mr. Woodward's quarter at Christmas.

Mrs. Moore insisted upon my staying the night ; and indeed, her illness induced me to do this, as she would not suffer any body to sit up with her ; and her bed was one of the daughters of *the bed of Ware*. You know supper is my only meal ; therefore, when the lady retired to her repose, I had the cloth laid, and a nobleman, who had called in upon a visit, walked about the room while I ate it. About twelve, his Lordship left me. Upon hearing a loud knock at the door, immediately after, I rang, to enquire what occasioned it ; when the butler informed me, that the noble visitor had met some ill-looking fellows at the corner of the street, who, upon his telling them he feared they were upon no good, one replied, “ Go ‘‘ home, my Lord, and be satisfied there is ‘‘ no harm intended you.” This induced his Lordship to return, in order to take a stick he had seen in the hall, as he passed through it, by way of defence.

As I generally read till I am sleepy, I took up a book with me into the bed-chamber, and employed myself in that manner till I heard the clock strike two. I then went

into bed; and I had not been laid down five minutes, before I heard a great noise in the house. Very fortunately for me this happened after I was undressed, otherwise I should have gone to have checked the servants for disturbing their lady, at a time when she was so much indisposed. This was a liberty I should have taken at the house even of a common acquaintance, and much more here, where I could be as free as in my own.

In a moment I heard the door of our chamber open, and perceived a great glare of light; upon which Mrs. Moore started up, and said, "Mary! Mary!" imagining it to be her maid; when we instantly heard a horrid deep voice, crying, "Lie still, or I will murder you," Another exclamation of the same nature succeeded, and so on to a sixth. In short, there was such a climax of murderous threats, that I verily believe they had studied their lessons to aggravate our fears.

They now set about ransacking the drawers, and employed themselves in packing up every thing that was portable. As the room looked into the garden, and from its largeness could contain many chests, they had leisure to continue this employment for a full hour; when they retired. You may be sure we lay still and mute during the whole of this transaction; and we were now in hopes that

that we had got rid of our dreadful visitors.

We were, however, mistaken; for one of them immediately returned, with a light in one hand and a pistol in the other, and drew back the curtain. Mrs. Moore now, for the first time, broke silence, crying, " You will not murder us!" The wretch seemed to deliberate a good while before he answered. At length, after a long pause, he replied, " No." Upon which my companion continued, " Nor will you murder any of those who belong to me, will you?" To this he returned, without any hesitation, " No." At that instant a watchman's rattle was heard, when the fellow threw down his pistol and ran away. Though I had heard distinctly all that past, I had not seen any of these manœuvres; for, in my fright, I had crept down to the bottom of the bed, where I lay more dead than alive; but upon the fellow's retiring, I re-assumed my place upon my pillow.

The means by which the ruffians had been disturbed, were as follow: The housekeeper lay in the front garret; and having captivated the butler, he had opened his trenches in an honourable way before her: hearing the noise, she imagined it was her enamorato, who, having got a glass too much, which was sometimes the case, was blundering up to her room. This inducing her to look

over the balusters, as it was a well stair-case, she saw the troop of thieves, each with a light and a pistol, enter her lady's room. Seeing this, she went into the balcony, where she waited till the watchman came his rounds, and then gave the alarm.

The watchman observed, that the lamp had been taken out of the glass globe at the door, and that the window over it was open. This had been left so by the carelessness of the house-maid. As soon as the watchman observed this, he made use of his rattle, which so frightened the fellows, that dropping their booty, they each shifted for himself. The man who had returned to our room, finding himself alone, made his way into the garden, and leapt into the next area; where, after hiding some trinkets which he had secreted from his associates, he was taken by Colonel Sloper's servants.

Being delivered by them to the watchmen, who by this time were assembled in a considerable body, on promise of lenity, he gave information where his companions were to be met with, and five more of them were taken. Two others, who had been left as a guard over Mrs. Moore's men servants, by being near the garden, had found means to make their escape. One of these two, whilst he was securing the butler, informed him, that one of the gang wanted to

to stab the nobleman as he went out; but a youth, who was but just returned from transportation, and had only joined them that day, had objected to their committing murder. The butler hearing his mistress just then scream, he said to the same man, "I hope they are not murdering my mistress!" To which the fellow replied, "I hope so too; but one of them is a bloody dog; and had I money to go abroad, I would leave them." This he probably did, as he was one of those who made their escape, and has not been heard of since.

In the morning, all the six were brought for Mrs. Moore to swear to the person that had come with the pistol to her bed-side. Upon seeing them, she fixed on the youth before-mentioned, who was quite an agreeable lad. As she was about to take the oath, he told her to be cautious of what she was going to do, as an oath was a very *sacred* business: an admonition, which, as it came from one of that calling, seemed to astonish all present. As for myself, I was not at Mrs. Moore's when the cavalcade arrived; for I no sooner heard of their approach, than I ran over to the Neapolitan ambassador's, where I remained till they were gone. Though I needed not to have been afraid of being called upon, as my testimony could have been of no manner

of use, from my having played least in sight.

To make short of my story, which I fear you think already too long, five of the wretches who had occasioned our fright were executed; and the youth, in whose behalf some favourable circumstances appeared, was once more transported. What made his case the more pitiable was, that he belonged to a family of some opulence and credit. I have since been informed, that his sister at that very time rode in her coach and six.

It will be necessary, that I should just acquaint you with the circumstances which occasioned this robbery, as they too often arise from similar imprudences. Mrs. Moore's butler had been sent into the city to receive a considerable sum of money, which he had deposited in a canvas bag. As the amount was all in gold, except one thirty pound note, it made a figure. Before he got home, he called at a public-house in the neighbourhood for a pint of porter. Whether he was really tired of his load, or from a motive of ostentation to shew his treasure, he set the bag that contained it upon the table. One of the fellows, who afterwards broke into his mistress's house, happening to sit near him, upon observing the butler's load, asked him, with an appearance of surprise, whether that

that was all gold? To which the butler *wisely* replied in the affirmative; and not content with this, opened the bag to convince him. From that hour the house was watched; and on the Sunday night following, the very night my ill fate drove me to sleep there, they found means to effect their purposes.

Your wicked wits have said, in ridicule to our sex, that a woman's postscript is generally longer than the letter itself. I think I stand some chance of incurring the same reflection for my story-telling; the additions seeming likely to be more prolix than the story itself, prolix as it has been. I cannot, however, help giving you an instance of insensibility it produced, which is as extraordinary as any I ever heard of.

The nobleman who had fallen in with the thieves the night of the robbery, went to Newgate to see them; when the youth I have been speaking of, accosted his Lordship, and, with as much unconcern as if he had been an indifferent person, said, " If you please, my Lord, I will shew you the felons." And upon his Lordship's enquiring of him, why they did not rob him, as they had so favourable an opportunity? he told him, there were two reasons for it; the one was, because they had better game in view, as they always preferred

waiting upon the ladies to the gentlemen; and the other was, that officers in the guards, (you must observe that his Lordship was personally known by them) were said to have so many calls for their money, that they seldom carried much about them; so that the attack would have been attended with certain danger, and an uncertain profit, which it would have been imprudent to hazard.

When the news of the robbery was spread abroad, the house was like a fair. I therefore took my leave of Mrs. Moore, on the Monday evening, and went to my new lodgings; for I really believe I could never have slept in the house, had I continued in it for ever.

To what an immoderate length has this robbery *obliged* me to extend my present letter! for it would have left your curiosity in a disagreeable suspense, had I, “like ‘Butler’s story of the Bear and Fiddle,’ ‘began—and broke off in the middle.’” Could I have foreseen, when I first entered upon it, that it would have so much extended my usual bounds, I believe I should have totally omitted it.—But as I was, though the greatest part of the time an *invisible* performer, so capital a one in the piece; and the impression made on my mind by the shocking representation will never

never be eradicated, I could not pass it over in silence.

G. A. B.

LETTER XC.

Dec. 15, 17—

WHEN I got to my new lodgings, I found that my maid who had come up in the stage, was arrived there, and had brought the things I should want. Unluckily for me in the present state of my finances, the person that kept the house had been accustomed to provide every necessary for her lodgers. This, however, was convenient for me, as my hand-maid, who was pretty, for you know I cannot be satisfied if those about me are only passable, could do little else but dress me and work at her needle. I therefore was obliged to accept of her proffered service, though it was attended with an extraordinary expence.

His excellency Comte Haslang now sent me the money he had promised me; and which I had almost given over, as there were three months due. Mr. Woodward hearing of the robbery, sent me immediately a draft upon a printer in Fleet-street, whose name I have forgot. As I was too ill to go with it myself, I sent to Strand for my foot-boy to come to town, for I

K. 5.

found.

found it inconvenient to be without him; and my kind landlady offered me a bed for him, in such a manner, that I understood it was to be gratis.

When he came to town, I sent him with the bill for acceptance. As he was going into the city for this purpose, attracted by the warbling of a syren in Leicester-fields, he stood among a group of gaping auditors to listen; when one of the nimble-fingered gentry eased him of his handkerchief, and at the same time of the bill, which the wife-acre had carefully tied up in the corner of it. In consequence of this loss he was afraid to return. Wondering what could detain him, I was not a little uneasy; not from any apprehension of my treasure, you know me too well to suppose that could give me a moment's uneasiness, but from my servant's being a country lad, and totally unacquainted with the city. He, however, at length came home, and with a long face told me his piteous tale; upon which I thought it necessary to send a note to the person on whom the bill was drawn, to acquaint him of the accident; and whether the thief was apprehensive of presenting it, or saw the lad coming out, I cannot say, but it was never heard of more. Luckily I did not just at that time stand in need of the money.

My

My health being re-established by the assistance of my worthy friend Mr. Adair, I went frequently to my house at Strand, where the inhabitants are mostly fishermen. My honest neighbours expressed the greatest satisfaction whenever they saw me; and as even seeming regard is pleasing, though from strangers, and the residence where you suppose yourself loved, always has the preference, I chose to spend my Christmas there. When I came to reflect on the narrow escape Mr. Woodward's box of writings had met with, I could not but congratulate myself on my having deposited them in a place of safety. Had they been lost, I should never have forgiven myself; though no blame could have been imputed to me, as a trust of such consequence would have affected me infinitely more than if it had been my own.

I had at this time frequent visits from Mr. Harris, and sometimes from Mr. Leake, who had purchased a part of Mr. Rutherford's share, as he had been obliged to dispose of his fourth. In these interviews, I was assured, that no reconciliation should take place without my being made a party. I soon found London too expensive for me; I therefore discharged my lodging, and returned to take up my abode entirely in my little rural residence, where I could live infinitely cheaper than in Leicester-street.

For the good lady whose apartments had been taken for me, having been accustomed to good lodgers and good living, to shew her taste, generally provided enough to serve the whole family, company and all; notwithstanding I every day sent down word that I never eat but of one dish. This was attended with an expence I could by no means afford; and not being able to shut my ears any longer to the whispers of prudence, I determined on a removal.

Though I thus lived in retirement and solitude, not a moment passed without some employment, for it is that alone which can make life supportable. How have I been surprised to hear people complaining of time's hanging heavy on their hands!—For my own part, I have often, very often, “chid the hasty-footed time” for flying so fast.—The complaints of having nothing to do, is such a vulgarism, that I wonder any persons, who make the least pretence to feeling, can degrade themselves by the acknowledgment.—Thus beautifully has my much regretted friend Thomson*, painted the state of those who truly enjoy life.

“ An elegant sufficiency, content,

“ Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,

“ Ease and alternate labour, useful life,

“ Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.”¹²

* Thomson's Spring, Line 3158.

This

This is a just sketch of the supremest happiness this sublunary state will admit of. Unless every hour be employed in some useful concern, or innocent amusement, life cannot be said to be enjoyed.—The idle only exist; the busy live.

About this period, I received a note from Mr. Foote, who was lately returned from Scotland, informing me, that he had left Mr. Woodward well, and had taken for him a house, near his own, at Little Chelsea. He desired I would go to look at it, and get it in readiness for his reception at his return, which would be in a month or six weeks. He then requested to see me, as his theatre was ready to receive me; which he would do with open arms, should an engagement be agreeable to me.

I accordingly went to see the house, but found it only a hovel, and very inconvenient, but for a person who had another habitation, and kept this only to save appearances. As I was sensible there could be no duplicity in Mr. Woodward's character, yet as, at the same time, I knew he could not be without the assistance of persons of the faculty, I declined having any thing to do in the affair. In the same letter which conveyed to Mr. Foote my sentiments on that head, I thanked him for his kind offer, but told him that neither my health nor spirits would permit me to accept of it.

Indeed, the former was restored to a tolerable state; but as for my spirits, those spirits which you have so often admired, which the first geniuses of the age have condescended to be pleased with, and "which have so often set the table in a roar," they were gone, gone I fear, for ever. In this fallen situation, what figure could I hope to make with that son of laughter, our modern Aristophanes! Besides, the hopes I had of being again retained in the service of the muse I had so long had the honour of representing with success, would have prevented me, had I been in a vein to *play the first fiddle*, as a noble lady once said I did.

Had the Hay-market Theatre been then upon the plan it now is, I know not a performer, if they were able to go through the fatigue, but would gladly have accepted of an engagement, be their consequence what it would. Mr. Colman is indefatigable, and spares no expence to indulge and entertain the town. The former manager depended mostly upon his own strength, and his own pieces; which gave but very few opportunities for a performer in any capital line to make a tolerable figure.

Mr. Woodward, upon his return from Scotland, was pressed to play three or four nights at York; where, as in every other place, he was justly admired. When he came to town, I informed him of my rejection of

the

the house ; he seemed to approve of my having done so, as he said, he had not given Mr. Foote any such commission, it being impossible for him to live in the style of a *bon vivant*, like the wit his employer, nor could he exist by himself. Here he was pleased to pay me a compliment, that my humbled vanity now forbids me to repeat.

During the summer, the manager reaped a plenteous harvest, with very little trouble ; which was in a great measure owing to such a favourite actor as Mr. Woodward making one of his company, after an absence of several months. At the conclusion of it, those two gentlemen made a party to go through France. Finding myself in the same turn of mind, I took a trip to Boulogne, where I paid a visit to the Convent in which I spent my early days, and had the pleasure of seeing Mother St. Francis, the nun for whom I entertained so much respect and affection.

Upon the sight of this much-loved abode of innocence and felicity, I could not help again regretting, with heart-felt anguish, my having ever been forced to leave its peaceful walls. After what I had experienced from the duplicity of mankind, the vicissitudes of fortune, and the unsatisfactoriness of the pleasures of the gay world, I sincerely lamented that I had not preferred the certain tranquillity to be found here, to the delusive joys an unconfined life affords.

You will say, I doubt not, from the knowledge you have of my disposition, that I am always in extremes ; now penitive to a degree, and wishing myself buried in the gloom of a cloister ; now living beyond all bounds, and dying for company and gaiety.—That this is my temper, I candidly acknowledge—not a particle of moderation is contained in this frame of mine.—Mediocrity and I are strangers.—But whilst I make this acknowledgment, let me hope it will be admitted as some palliation for my errors. To err is human. But as these, like my speech, have ever been spontaneous and unpremeditated, and always attended with sincere compunction ; may they, upon this account, be viewed with a less rigorous eye. It is now time, that I leave this bewitching convent, which, whenever I visit it, awakens those religious propensities that, amidst all my wanderings, are still inherent in my heart. — Suppose me then once more in England.

Before the geniuses of comedy returned, from their tour, Mr. Harris called upon me one day, and as I was not at home, desired my servant to inform me, that he would dine with me the next day. But as he was returning to town, he met me at Turnham-Green, and went back with me. He then told me, that Mr. Colman and the other proprietors were on the eve of being reconciled,

ciled, and that I might depend upon being included as one of the first articles of the treaty.

Always relying upon a promise, from a consciousness of the sacred light in which I view an obligation of that nature myself, I was as much assured of Mr. Harris's performing that he had now made me, as if my articles had been signed, and in my pocket. Accordingly, when Mr. Woodward returned to England, upon his enquiring what had been done, I informed him of my *certainty* of an engagement. To this he made no reply; and just as I was going to enquire the reason of his silence upon the subject, the servant brought me a letter. I found it to be from my mother, who was but just returned to town from Oxfordshire, where she generally spent the summer with a family by whom her company was much courted. She informed me therein, that Mr. Harris had just called at her house, and desired to see me the next day in Brewer-street, where he would meet me, as very particular business rendered it impossible for him to come to Strand.

Upon reading this letter to Mr. Woodward, his countenance seemed to clear up a little, for his looks were always a true barometer to his sentiments. He was a man that might be truly said to carry his heart in his hand. He was above disguise; and you might
read

read in his countenance, with uncommon perspicuity, what passed in his bosom. But the doubt that had prevented him from congratulating me upon the occasion, was not yet quite cleared away. For he said, with great composure, "I doubt yet."

I ordered the chaise to be ready at nine, that I might have the pleasure of breakfasting with my mother, whom I had not seen for some time. The manager came an hour before that on which he had appointed to meet me; and I believe would not have been displeased, had I disobeyed his summons; for the moment he came in, I could not avoid observing, from his manner of accosting me, that all was not right. The great master of nature makes Brutus * say, "Ever note, Lucilius, when love begins to sicken and decay, it useth an enforced ceremony." And judging by this judicious remark of the great Roman, I plainly perceived that the regard Mr. Harris had so lately professed for me, had begun to sicken and decay.

Nor was I deceived in the application; for my supposed superior was no sooner seated, than he informed me that the proprietors were reconciled. But how was I surprised, when he added, that he had mentioned an engagement for me, but Mr.

* Julius Cæsar, Act IV. Scene II.

Leake not seconding it, as he expected, it was not to be procured; as upon the first mention of it, Mr. Colman had declared, that he would sooner see the theatre in flames, and himself in the midst of it, than consent to my ever being of the company.

I was free enough to tell him, that he might at least have deferred this intelligence till an opportunity had offered for his communicating it to me; or he might have conveyed it to me in a letter, and not have brought me to town upon such a sleeveless errand. To which he replied, that as Mr. Colman was anxious to engage Woodward, he sent for me to advise me to prevail upon my friend not to engage without me.

Rage is not my prevailing weakness, otherwise I should have found it roused upon this occasion. On the contrary, I generally suffer in silence for the misconduct of others, and smother my anger. I had, however, just power to say in answer to this insult, that I had too much spirit to be tacked to the agreement even of the first performer that trod the stage; and too much merit to be unemployed, and take a salary for nothing. Mr. Harris bowed; said he admired my sentiments; and we then parted, with as much ceremony and cold good breeding, as if we had never met before.

fore. Thus one half hour destroyed a friendship, which to appearance promised, but three days before, a much greater degree of permanence.

Here could I once more launch out on the fluctuation of all things in life, and the certain disappointments that attended every pleasing expectation of mine. But causes for doing this have so frequently occurred in the foregoing pages, that I have nearly exhausted the subject; and I would by no means hazard a charge of repetition, which, from my not keeping copies of my letters, might happen.

G. A. B.

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